The Fortune of the Indies

EDITH BALLINGER PRICE

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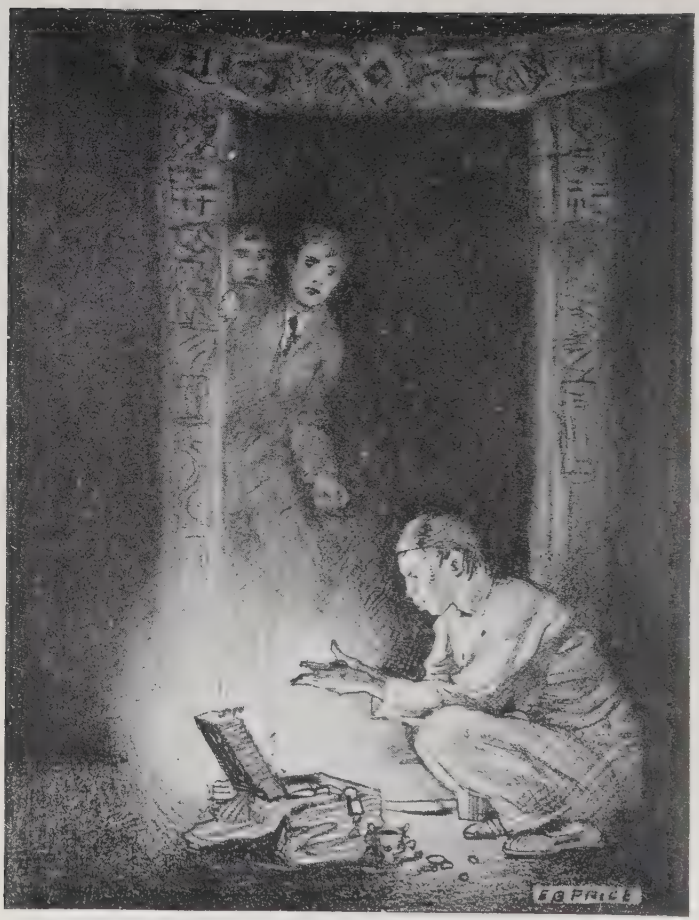
THE
FORTUNE OF THE INDIES



A ruby shone like fire in the palm of his yellow hand

THE FORTUNE OF THE INDIES

BY

EDITH BALLINGER PRICE

Author of "The Happy Venture," "Silver Shoal Light," "Us and the Bottle-Man," "Blue Magic," etc.

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THE AUTHOR

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TO R. T.

I have no right to love the sea
Save with the love that was born in me;
But you, whose father's father gave
Himself to serve the wind and wave,
Whose kin have sailed the seven seas,—
Your spirit is at one with these.

So, as you read my dreamed-of tales,
You hear the wind in long-furled sails;
The blood of brave sea-faring men
Stirs in your very heart again;
You glamour all my pages o'er
With sea-love that your kinsmen bore.

I have no right to love the sea
Save with the love that was born in me;
You who do honor to my page
Can call the sea your heritage.

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THE FORTUNE OF THE INDIES

The Fortune of the Indies

CHAPTER I

INGRAMS PAST

RESTHAVEN looks, in many ways, much as it did a hundred years ago. Except that then there was a tall sailing-ship alongside every wharf, and there were brown Malay seamen singing, and very curious bales piled on the piers, wafting scents of tea and coffee and unknown spice across the New England sea-smell. And there were dark, lofty whaling-vessels, too, fitting out for their next long cruise into all the waters of the world; for in those days Resthaven boasted both the Eastern and the whaling trades. A very few of the old whalers still come in to the quiet harbor—bluff, square-rigged ships, too proud to install the steam-engines that would shorten their cruises but injure their long-cherished

tradition. So, because of these few stout survivors, Resthaven is not altogether bare, even to-day, of square yards and gray canvas.

But many of the low wharves are unused now; their great piles are rotting oozily below tide-water mark. On the jetties, grass grows in rough patches where once rich cargoes were piled; silence hangs across the water that once tingled to the lift of anchor chanteys. Up from the waterfront the narrow, shaded streets climb steeply; some of them are paved still with cobbles, stretching in gray, uneven slopes beneath ancient elms. The houses that border these streets have changed little in the hundred years. Time has dignified and not deteriorated them; they seem to gaze serenely, each from the delicate fanlight above its fine doorway, where honeysuckle, or clematis, or swinging wisteria half hides the white, fluted doorposts.

Perhaps least changed of all is the old Ingram mansion, which stands proudly, as it should, on the highest ground in all Resthaven, fronting the wide harbor view with its pillared portico and curved stone steps. It is approached up a neat flagged pathway, and enclosed by a

wrought-iron fence, over which lean lilac and syringa bushes. Around it great elms raise lordly boughs—leafless now—and pattern the white walls with their shifting shadows. In this early February twilight the shades were not yet drawn—indeed, blinds are seldom closed at all in Resthaven—and had you been walking up the narrow, brick sidewalk of Chesley Street, you might have seen within the high-ceiled dining-room of the Ingram mansion two old ladies who stood beside the window anxiously looking out. They were very much alike, these old ladies, in their plain gray dresses and soft white fichus. Alike, too, were the slight frowns which troubled their blue eyes. They were watching for their grandniece, who should long ago have been at home; indeed, the tea-urn had been boiling for the past half hour.

Jane Ingram had forgotten that she should have been at home. The increasingly sharp voice of the February dusk-wind did not serve to remind her of it. In response to its whistling she merely turned up the collar of her rough, blue reefer and squared her elbows again on a pile-head of what still was known

as Ingram's Wharf. Just so had her great-grandfather, Mark Ingram, set his elbows upon the taffrail of his ship as she warped into that same dock a very great many years before.

Jane was twelve years old. She was not very big, and she had what everybody in Resthaven recognized as "the Ingram eyes"—very blue and deep-set under perfectly level eyebrows. Her mouth was rather straight, too, and so was her hair, which was tawny in color and somewhat unruly. It was clipped short below her ears, and to keep it back from her forehead she habitually tied it with a blue tape—a thing which her great-aunts considered unsuitable. The tape was at present concealed by a blue watch-cap, which was pulled over her ears in so determined a fashion that only a few wisps of hair escaped from beneath it.

Resthaven Harbor deepened from gray to green, from green to purple, and stars swam above it—blue winter stars, tangling among the rigging of the old whaler on which Jane was so intent. Aboard the ship a kerosene lamp flared out, sending a long flicker up the foremast. The lighthouse which marked the

harbor mouth began punctuating the dusk with slow flashes. There was no sound at all but little cold noises of water along the piers.

Jane woke suddenly to the settling chill and the creeping darkness, and removed her elbows from the pile-head. She shook herself and ran up the hill, clattering over the cobbles of Chesley Street and bursting in precipitately at the wide, white door of the Ingram house. A savory smell of muffins made her rather glad she had remembered to come home, and she slid out of her reefer and rubbed her cold fingers. Aunt Lucia came into the hall; Aunt Ellen had taken her seat behind the steaming urn.

"My dear, do you think you should stay out quite so long? It 's very cold, besides being so dark."

"I wasn't cold," Jane said, "and the dark is nice, because there are lights in it and a different sort of wind."

Miss Lucia, who could not imagine any sort of wind being pleasant, however different, said nothing, and Jane installed herself at the table with a hungry expression.

"Where are the boys?" she inquired.

"Not yet in," Miss Ellen answered from behind the tea-cups.

"I 'm afraid we 'll always be that kind of a family," Jane apologized, attacking her supper heartily.

The aunts were silent. Although they had had seven years of practice, they never could frame satisfactory answers to their niece's remarks. Before he died, Jane's father had said to them: "Don't bother with her too much; she 's a safe kind of queer, I think." If this phrase had ever reached the ears of Jane's brothers, she would never have heard an end of it, but as it was, two conscientious old ladies guarded it in their memories and tried their best not to "bother" too much with Jane.

While they are waiting for Mark and Alan (the eldest Ingram son is always Mark) we might do well to look about this still old mansion. The green dusk veiled the portico as we entered; we did not see how sadly it stands in need of paint. But within this paneled room, gently lighted by oil-lamps, many little things all point toward a conviction that the Ingram fortunes cannot be what they were when the

first Mark Ingram built his house here above the wharves where his ships lay. No, the little woven rugs are very threadbare; there are gaps in the rows of china within the shell cabinet, hinting at the reluctant sale of least treasured pieces; Miss Ellen's mouse-gray dress, if we only knew it, has been turned; and, for that matter, Jane's reefer once belonged to Alan and has been for several years in the cedar chest, waiting until her shoulders should be broad enough to wear it.

But lessened fortunes cannot diminish the beauty of fine architecture. There is no more lovely stairway in Resthaven than that of the Ingram mansion, sweeping up its gracious flights with perfect curve of smooth mahogany rail and delicate banisters. And the doorways are fashioned broad and high; in the down-stairs rooms they are arched, and fluted pilasters support their curved white lintels. The long windows are set with that exquisite proportion which no modern architect finds easy to copy, and wooden inside shutters with smoked-glass knobs fold back against the paneled walls. To-night Miss Ellen rose to shut those which closed the east-

ern windows of the dining-room, for a rising nor'easterly breeze had begun to thrust in occasional sharp wisps of cold around the loosened panes.

The hall door flew open with a clash, admitting a swirl of very cold wind, as well as the breathless persons of Mark and Alan Ingram. If you were as well acquainted with generations of Ingrams as Resthaven is, you would wonder how these boys came to bear the name at all. For they were both as dark as their mother had been, and as tall, whereas the Ingrams had always been small, with a wiry slightness that gave an impression of height. No, it was quite evident that the last of the true Ingram look was to be found in the slow, blue fire of Jane's eyes and the clear lines of a mouth that could somehow be at once determined and dreamy.

Mackinaws cast off, the two boys sat themselves down with apologies to the aunts. The appetites of seventeen and fifteen after a long tramp are not soon satisfied, and there was silence for a time around the orange lamp. The aunts were busy over apportioning the

dessert. Jane folded her hands and said vaguely:

"I wonder if they just said it that way because it sounds grand, or if it 's really true."

"What?" Alan inquired; "what, anyway?"

" 'With the *Fortune of the Indies* went the fortunes of the Ingrams,' " his sister quoted dreamily.

"Does n't it look as though it were true?" Mark said. "I have n't noticed much fortune embarrassing the Ingrams of late. I 'd awfully like more ham, Aunt Lucia."

"I 'm afraid there is no more, my dear," said Miss Lucia. "Could you eat bread? The saying is true, Jane, though I am very little given to believing in old tales."

"I must say I don't see where it all went to," Alan put in. "Wasn't great-grandfather supposed to be one the wealthiest men in the China trade?"

"You must remember," said Miss Ellen, "that most of his great investments went wrong after his death. The Civil War ruined many a fortune, Alan."

"And the ship and her cargo were lost," Miss Lucia added.

"The ship was n't everything," argued Alan, "even if she was the best in the trade. And it was before the Civil War."

"The *Fortune of the Indies,*" Jane murmured; "she was the most beautiful ship that ever was."

"The thing *I 'd* like to know," said Mark, "is whatever became of the model of her."

"Who would n't!" exclaimed his brother, reaching for the cookies. "It does seem as if the Ingrams ought to have been able to hang on to that, at least."

The aunts sighed a little. This topic was one which recurred every so often, unavoidably, and was apt to last indefinitely, if not diverted. The old ladies, with a little nod to one another, rose from the table. Aunt Lucia took from behind the kitchen door a small apron, which her sister fastened for her. Though there was a little servant, of a sort, in the kitchen, the aunts themselves always washed the remnant of Ingram china.

The boys went off to study, but Jane, who needed very little impetus to be started on an

endless train of thought about her great-grandfather's ship, stole down the hall with a purpose of her own. At the back of the house, partly under the sweeping stairway, was a small room which in the old days had been used as the office. There still stood in a corner the great glass-doored secretary, within whose drawers lay the precious log-books of many an Ingram cruise, and the carnelian seal cut with the image of a ship and the letters "M. I." and a hundred other dusty reminders of a time when momentous business had been carried on in this little white-paneled room. Those white walls were hung with strange, stiff paintings of ships—the *Fortune of the Indies* herself, the *Gloria,* the *Andromache,* Great-grandfather Mark's first ship. It was a still room, even in that quiet house. By day you could look out from its small-paned window to the garden; hollyhocks in summer, and tall foxgloves, and columbine seedlings pushing themselves between the flagging of the path, all shadowed by the oldest elms in Resthaven. The elms were bare now, and the uncut grass yellow and rough, and the dry stalks were black in the flower-beds.

The room was dark. Jane lighted the candle on the secretary and curled herself into the smooth seat of the desk-chair. She knew just which one of the battered log-books she wanted, and she drew it from among the others and opened it. Cramped old writing in yellowed ink, deciphered by candle-light, does not make easy reading, but Jane was well used to this.

June 3, 1841. This day 12 M set sail for the Indies and China in my new ship the *Fortune of the Indies.* Light air S. by E. 2 P. M. ordered all sail set, inclusive of the moonsail—that which the *Gloria* has not. Lost Kennico Light 5:29 P. M. Breeze freshening from the S. The ship is handy, it appears.

And that was the beginning of the first cruise of the *Fortune of the Indies.* And all that he could say of her, this Great-grandfather Mark of few words, was that she "appeared handy." She, the first clipper ship that had ever sailed from Resthaven; a dream of wonder, from the red burgee that floated above her main truck, shimmering down through spaces of new, sunlit canvas and mazy rigging to the spotless decks; the bright, black hull, the burnished flash of the copper

plates below her water-line, the gilded figure that bent above her keen, clipper bows. He had dreamed her and built her; now he was to sail her. Could n't he, wondered his great-granddaughter, spare a word of the pride and contentment he must have felt to write in the stiff old log? And Jane could see the moonsail, floating nebulous, high, high above the starlit expanse of the other sails. The *Gloria* had no moonsail; few ships had at that time. She was the other Ingram vessel, older, steadier than the *Fortune* and less beautiful, but a noble ship and one that had toiled long to win those Ingram fortunes now dwindled and lost.

On the day that the *Fortune of the Indies* first sailed, Grandfather Mark was eight years old. Jane had calculated this for herself. By frequent reference to the family Bible and comparison with the log-books she was able, by this time, to state offhand the age of any Ingram at the time of any cruise. She wondered if he had stood there with great-grandmother on the wharf, watching the new ship drop down to the harbor mouth with the tide, watching her great sails one by one soaring into place, watching the farewell dip of the red burgee as

the *Fortune of the Indies* filled away and shimmered out to sea.

But it was not many years before the little Mark went to sea, too,—first as boy and then as mate, till at last the child who had watched the new sails set took command of the *Gloria* when he was scarcely out of his teens, as men did in those fine old days. So father and son, each in his own ship, sailed out of Resthaven to far ports.

On the cruise before his last, Great-grandfather Mark fashioned, in long hours of trade-wind idleness, a model of the ship he loved. It was a very beautiful thing. Jane had never seen it, but she knew that it was beautiful. For the man who could have fashioned in his mind the *Fortune* herself could surely build a perfect model of her. He had brought the little ship home; his wife had installed it above the parlor mantel. His daughters, Ellen and Lucia, remembered it dimly; they were very little girls when both ship and model were lost.

Of the last cruise of the *Fortune of the Indies* there is no log, for it went down with her and her master. But there is an agitated entry in

the log of the *Gloria,* scrawled by the second Mark in a Malay port.

I have heard only now that on the third day of June, this year 1854, my dear Father was lost with his Ship, the *Fortune of the Indies* and all therein, in the China Sea, lat. and long. unknown. Few particulars are available; it appears the typhoon which delayed my progress from the Bashee Islands struck with greater force farther west. One survivor was picked up clinging to a hatch-grating, by the *Aphrodite,* Salem, just arrived here, but died before any detail could be obtained from him. My Father was in the forty-sixth Year of his age.

Grandfather Mark did not add that the *Fortune of the Indies* was lost on the anniversary of the day she set sail on her first cruise. And the model, too, was gone. In vain did Miss Lucia and Miss Ellen, racking their wits at Jane's urgent plea, try to remember just when it was that the little vessel hung no more above the mantel-shelf. A bulky thing to steal, and a difficult one to dispose of, but stolen it must have been, for it was scarcely believable that any Ingram, however penniless, would sell a thing so precious. But there the matter stood; the Ingrams finally accepted

their loss as regrettable but inevitable. Yet here was Jane, when the fire had cooled, fanning to new life the flames of longing for the lost ship and the lost fortunes.

Indeed, no wonder the old family saying came to be! Nothing was quite the same after the *Fortune of the Indies* and her master vanished in the grip of the typhoon. Great-grandfather Mark in his will left the *Gloria* to his son; to his wife the mansion and a group of investments already tottering as the Eastern trade slackened. The surviving Ingrams began to readjust themselves. The younger Mark sailed the *Gloria* for some years more, but the fine old ships were being steadily elbowed off the seas by swift and scornful steam-vessels. The *Gloria* was very old and Grandfather Mark had no money for further ventures; slowly she broke up at Ingram Wharf, only faintly reproachful in her resignation. And Jane's father came no more nearly in touch with the sea than a clerkship in a Boston mercantile house.

It is a long foreword, and dull perhaps, but the shadows of it all clung so closely in the little office of the Ingram house that Jane felt it

keenly and lived over the tale and longed for a hundred years to drop off the world; longed for many and many a thing, till the candle guttered and she jumped up, shivering, to blow it out.

Aunt Lucia was mending beside the library lamp. Aunt Ellen was asleep. They were very old ladies. Jane stood in the doorway, suddenly aware of how closely they were linked with all that she had been dreaming of. Why, they were little girls when the *Fortune of the Indies* went down!

"Have you been studying, my dear?" Miss Lucia asked. "You have been very quiet."

No, Jane had n't been studying. In fact, she had forgotten entirely the three pages of parsing and the chapter of French history which she should have been doing. And it was bedtime now. What a scramble in the morning! She fled upstairs to see whether or not she could read any of the history while she undressed, which experiment resulted in her standing at an uncomfortable angle with one boot in her hand for at least twenty-five minutes.

CHAPTER II

INGRAMS PRESENT

THE boys were together in Mark's room. They had finished their studying and sat characteristically—Mark sprawled in a big chair, Alan perched on the edge of the table. The room, talk as the aunts might, was always more or less a confusion of the materials of Mark's latest hobby. At present the desk was strewn with half-breadth plans of patent steel merchant vessels and hastily whittled hull-models of wooden ones. Blocks and boards lay upon the floor and leaned in several of the chairs. Where there are boards and planes and jack-knives there are very probably chips and shavings also, though these were not evident in the lamplight which now illuminated the room. Mark had rather neatly cornered them all behind the door and hoped fervently that the aunts would not make too thorough

an investigation of his domain. Alan's room had at one time been almost as much cluttered with wireless apparatus, but his instruments were put away now, still with the war seal of the government upon them.

Both boys had inherited an abstract love of the sea and planned vaguely to follow it some day, but their love of it did not pervade them as did their sister's passion for ships of the Ingram trade. Mark was clever with his hands and head, and had some thought of being a ship-builder and waking the old yards of Resthaven to new life. Alan was more dreamy; he scribbled rather thrilling sea-yarns sometimes, and decided that he would write a book as good as "The Pilot" when he finished school. But much as they loved the sea, and unhappy as they would have been away from the harbor life which had filled all their years, neither of them, I think, had ever longed to stand in the first Mark's stead on the quarter-deck of the *Fortune*. They would far rather have stood on the bridge of a dreadnaught—the thought of that really did wake the old sea-blood, all a-tingle for a new adventure.

"Jane 's cracked about the model, is n't she?" Mark said now, reflectively.

"I should say!" Alan agreed. "She 's on the lookout for it everywhere she goes. Were you there when she came streaming in the other day, half exploding because she 'd seen some old model through the window of Cap'n Ben Lockhart's house?"

"No," his brother replied.

"Well, she did," Alan went on, "and did n't dare to go in, and spent an hour snooping around to various windows till she could see the stern, and it turned out to be the *Penelope* or something."

"I 'm just as keen as she is to find it," Mark said.

"Naturally," Alan returned; "so am I. But we don't go around like lunatics because of it."

"She does n't go around like a lunatic!" Mark cried, suddenly defiant. "She always was a queerish kid. Suppose you had some girl for a sister that was always fiddling around with hair-ribbons and boxes of candy and things."

"Oh, well!" Alan argued, "she would n't be

our sister. I must say, hair-ribbons aren't Jane's specialty; what 's she think that old string looks like, anyway? But I shouldn't object to the boxes of candy."

"Oh, you know what I mean," Mark sighed. "I mean I 'd rather have her daffy over the *Fortune of the Indies* than over some silly lace dress."

"I knew what you meant before," Alan said. "Of course I 'd rather. Let 's crawl to bed if we want to walk out to Bluff Point before breakfast."

Jane caught up with her brothers next morning before they had reached the end of Chesley Street. She was tripping over a boot-lace which she had not had time to fasten and turning up her coat-collar as she ran.

"Wait!" she gasped to the two figures in the cold gray dawn-light ahead. "I 'm coming, too!"

"Oh, you 'll freeze," Alan said. "It 'll be cold as poison. We 're going clear out to the Point."

"I know; that 's why I came. I don't care if it 's cold."

"It 's too early," Alan continued. "You ought to be in bed. What would the aunts say? And really, you 'll freeze."

"Fiddle-dee-dee," said Jane impolitely. "Come on."

"All right, then," Mark said, "but don't make a fuss if you do get cold."

"I never make a fuss," Jane said. This was quite true, and Mark knew it.

"I really like to have you along," he said gallantly, "but I didn't want you to be uncomfortable."

Jane strode along in terrific steps, her hat over her eyes and her hands in the pockets of the reefer. It did not take much walking to leave Resthaven behind, and very soon the gray cobbled streets gave way to beaten footpaths over rolling fields all dun-colored with matted, frost-hard grass, where dead burrs plucked at the passers-by and shivering arms of silver bay-bushes crackled against them. But up from the water, where the light was beginning to spread slate-color into blue, ran a biting, bracing salt wind, and the Ingrams ran, too, laughing and swinging their arms as they raced each

other over the knobbly meadows to the bare, surf-drenched rocks of Bluff Point.

It was at the very corner where bay met sea, and the long Atlantic rollers flung themselves here, cold, cold and white-lipped under the February sky. Great gray waves leaped and shouted and thundered and tore masses of shuddering seaweed from the rocks to fling them back and forth in the swirl of foam. Jane was ecstatic and in her element. Standing upon a rock perilously near the spray-clouds that flew about, she proceeded to indulge silently, but with wild gesticulations, in a form of play-acting which she secretly carried on at times. At this moment it was, of course, the *Fortune of the Indies* caught off the Horn. The sheets were frozen; the decks were a glare of ice; the main royal was slatting itself to pieces on the yard, and half-frozen men, clutching at slippery jacks, were trying desperately to furl it. Jane was leaning at a dangerous angle over an imaginary taffrail.

"Port, port your helm!" she shouted silently. "My heavens, we 're lost!"

Jane was indeed lost. Her gestures shook

her balance, her foot slipped on a patch of slimy weed, and she shot into an icy pool just as a wave broke thunderously into it. She was not hurt in the least, and scrambled out, dripping, before a white-faced Mark had done more than wet one leg to the knee. Her hair hung straight over her face and the blue tape was around her neck. Her hat had gone out to sea. Mark snatched off her reefer and pushed her into his own mackinaw.

"Run!" he said; "as fast as ever you can! Good gracious, how her teeth are chattering! Slap your arms, too."

They did run—Jane's brothers, alternately contrite, terrified, and angry, gasping mixed scoldings and encouragements all the way home. They tiptoed in at the garden door, listened breathlessly in the hall, and stole past the aunts' rooms. Mark routed from the shell cabinet a cut glass decanter full of anciently mellow peach brandy and poured Jane a dose which undoubtedly saved her from pneumonia, though it made her head spin. When Aunt Lucia came to wake her grand-niece, she never suspected the hot water bottle beneath the quilt,

nor saw the wet clothes surreptitiously drying behind a screen at the radiator.

Jane was composed and demure at breakfast, and wore her best hat to school. Mark and Alan ate hastily and silently. Jane said to them, as she stepped out upon the door-stone:

"I didn't mind. Suppose you really *were* frozen on the yard; it would be much awfuller."

Which, considering that they knew nothing of the cause of Jane's ducking, mystified the boys exceedingly. They looked after her, down Chesley Street. She appeared to be studying her French history, which she had again forgotten. Mark shook his head.

"What do you suppose she 'll ever tell the aunts about her hat?" he asked his brother reflectively, as they set out for school.

As a matter of fact, no one ever did find out what Jane said about her hat, or, indeed, thought again of hats, old or best. This was because of the astounding news—astounding, certainly, to the Ingram family—which Mark and Alan brought back from school that day and laid before their wondering relatives.

CHAPTER III

FOUND AND LOST

THE boys went to school at McArthur's Academy, a two-mile walk across a long bridge into a more populous town which lay to the north over a harbor backwater. As for Jane, she studied in company with several other small Resthaven girls under a firm old lady who lived in a rusty-red brick house on Ash Street. The old lady's name was Mrs. Titcomb, and once—so long ago that none of her small pupils could imagine it—she had been a sea-captain's wife, which naturally endeared her to Jane. Captain Titcomb had been lost at sea only two years after their marriage, and his wife had survived him so long that she seemed like any one of the Resthaven spinster ladies. It was almost impossible to realize that once she had leaned on the arm of a gallant captain; had trod the deck of his ship in her wedding finery,

and looked up beyond his brown young face to the sails that were to bear him to destruction. Jane thought of it sometimes as she gazed at Mrs. Titcomb's plain, strong old face, and Mrs. Titcomb would rebuke her for the gazing. She taught in a fashion not at all new-fangled, but extremely thorough. Perhaps it was partly due to Jane's schooling that she was so unlike most girls outside Resthaven—or in it, for the matter of that.

But it is not of Jane, nor of Mrs. Titcomb's Select School, that we must think now. For Mark and Alan, instead of loafing home across the bridge, musing at every stone pier and staring down-harbor to the smoke-drift at sea, were running pell-mell, their caps in their tingling hands, with news that, to the Ingrams, was vastly interesting.

They tumbled in unceremoniously upon the aunts, who were mending the fire in the grate circumspectly. Mark and Alan snatched the poker and shovel from the old ladies' hands, that they might be sure to listen, and using the implements unconsciously to point their remarks they poured out their tale, both at once.

"The model of the *Fortune of the Indies* is in Boston!"

"Ned Myers saw it when he was visiting his uncle!"

"The name was on the gold scroll at the stern!"

"It 's in a little old antique shop in the South End!"

"Will you let us go *instanter* to get it?"

"How much do you suppose they 'll want for it?"

The aunts put their hands to their heads in protest, and into the midst of all this hurly-burly drifted Jane, swinging her best hat by its ribbon.

"Want for what?" she inquired.

So the jumbled tale had to be poured forth all over again, the poker lunging, at times, dangerously near Jane's nose. Considering that she was really the person most deeply interested, Jane kept remarkably calm. Her mouth grew rather straighter than ever, and she merely said:

"I knew it would turn up some day."

The aunts really had to agree that some one must go to Boston, that they might at least

try to recover the ship model. Owing to the scantiness of the Ingram fortunes only one person could go, and that person was obviously Mark, and, quite as obviously, not Jane. She felt sure that she could win the model from the antique dealer, if her brother failed, even though she might have to smuggle it from the shop under cover of darkness and sail it out of Boston Harbor. To do this last, however, she would have needed to nibble a bit of *Alice in Wonderland's* mushroom, she thought ruefully.

She gave Mark a great many parting words of advice as to ways and means of threatening or cajoling the shopman, to which her brother paid no attention whatever, being much occupied with trying to determine in which pocket he should put his money. He was trying, also, not to seem as majestic as he felt. Journeys away from Resthaven were rare, and at the end of this one lay the pride of the Ingrams.

Jane's progress that day at Mrs. Titcomb's Select School was far from satisfactory to its mistress. Jane's eyes, for the most part, were fastened on the clock, instead of on her lesson books. This puzzled Mrs. Titcomb, who was a

clever and discerning old lady. She was accustomed to her pupil's gaze straying harborward through the long bow-window of the schoolroom, but this sudden interest in the face of the tall mantel-clock was unusual, and she could not fathom it. So far as she had been able to observe, time meant very little to Jane.

Jane wondered why she had never paid attention to the clock before. It was a genial affair with a smiling golden countenance, and a ship under full sail was painted on the case. Captain Titcomb had brought it to his wife, and the ship was his own *Honoria* which he had caused to be painted upon it. The only trouble with the clock, Jane decided, was that it idled through the hours twice as slowly as most clocks. "Because of its age, I expect," thought Jane—not in the least deceiving herself about the real cause of its slowness, which was that Mark was to return on the 5:40 and it was now only noon. So the clock ticked, and Jane did n't study her geography, and Mrs. Titcomb withheld her reproof, for she knew that something out of the ordinary was troubling this strangest of her pupils.

But even centuries pass, if we wait long

enough, and Mark's train did come in at last, and Mark himself arrived—in an extravagantly hired cab across the bridge—rather late for supper. His face told the outstanding fact of his story before he said a word.

"It 's gone," Jane said quickly.

"Yes," he growled, "it 's gone, all right. Somebody bought it just after Ned saw it."

"I fear we could hardly expect the luck to turn at this late time," murmured Miss Lucia.

"But did n't you find out *who* bought it?" Jane cried, shaking Mark's arm.

"Of course I tried, silly," Mark said. "They had no record of it. Just that it was sold. Some man,—he carried it off in an automobile. Some beastly collector, I suppose."

"Mark, not 'beastly,' " Miss Ellen protested gently.

"Well, he 'd no business collecting our ship," Mark muttered. "Not that we could have afforded to buy it, though, if it had been there. What do you suppose he paid for the thing? Eight hundred dollars!"

There was an incredulous gasp. In Rest-

haven it was hard to imagine the rising value of curios once so plentiful.

Supper was a silent one. The aunts, I think, regretted the wasted fare-money more than the loss of the model. Jane was wondering whether she, in her brother's place, could have brought to bear any cross-questioning or torture upon the antique man which would have revealed the new owner of the *Fortune of the Indies.*

Jane, who had been quite composed over the news of the model's discovery, was seemingly most calm over the tidings of its second disappearance. But after supper she went and ensconced herself gloomily in the office, with her chin in her hands and her elbows planted belligerently on the old desk. In the darkness the smell of the musty old leather-bound log-books was somewhat consoling; but whether she cried or not I can't say, because no one was there to see. She was an Ingram, however, and I doubt it.

But if Mrs. Titcomb had had reason to be displeased over her pupil's behavior in school before, she now had twice as much cause. Jane's conduct was really unbearable—star-

ing out of the window, counting unseen things on her fingers, and drawing up fictitious documents demanding the return of the *Fortune of the Indies* to her rightful owners. These documents she wrote with many flourishes and ornamented with large seals executed in red and blue crayon—all openly, without even the pretense of a sheltering geography book. Her lessons she recited in a half-hearted manner—what she knew of them—and seemed to care not at all for her teacher's remonstrances.

But Mrs. Titcomb was a wise old lady, after all. She kept Jane after school one day to finish a problem, and, when all the others had clattered out into the sunshine of Ash Street, summoned her to the window. Mrs. Titcomb had no hard-and-fast rule for the place from which she directed her school. She might sit at her dark old desk where she kept her ebony ruler and silver bell, or she was just as likely to be found sitting in a high-backed splint chair by the window, knitting, with a book on her knee and her keen eyes watching her class above the flickering needles. So to the chair by the window Jane went.

"This can't go on, you know," Mrs. Titcomb said, coming to the point at once, as was her way. "You 'd better tell me what 's the matter with you, and then I 'll know what to do with you."

So Jane, who feared Mrs. Titcomb not at all and respected her on account of her good sense in once marrying a sea-captain, told the whole tale.

"How nice it would be," reflected the old lady, polishing her spectacles, "if ever you 'd recite a lesson that way! Now sit down, and let 's talk."

Jane sat down, and they did talk. And it appeared that although Mrs. Titcomb was only four years old when the *Fortune of the Indies* and the first Mark Ingram sank in the China Sea, she remembered very well indeed the stir in Resthaven. The soft rustle of crinoline in her mother's shaded parlor as a quiet little knot of ladies talked over the tidings; the Ingram Wharf with its sober group of sea-faring men, and the *Gloria* lying there with her company flag at half-mast. She had docked only that morning with her tragic news to give Resthaven.

For the first Mark Ingram had been a man well loved and highly honored, and there was a hush over all the little town when the cruel word came. And it was to be remembered, too, that Mark Ingram was not the only loss. Resthaven men, for the most part, had made up the crew of the *Fortune*. Now no man of them was alive, and it was not for the Ingram mansion alone to be a house of mourning. Mrs. Titcomb did not remember Great-grandfather Mark himself—that last voyage had begun while she was still in the cradle—but of Grandfather Mark on that day she had a clear recollection. How he had come walking firmly up from Ingram Wharf, a spare, sober, young man, in black clothes with bright buttons upon them. Under his arm he had carried his ship's book, and he held his hat in his hand, in recognition of the salutes of Resthaven. Yes, Mrs. Titcomb could see him very distinctly.

"I remember even how his hair blew away from his face—men wore it longer then than now—and I was a thought afraid of him, he looked so stern and white. He had your blue eyes, Jane, and he looked bigger than he was,

always, because of his gait and the masterful way he held his head."

He had passed on up from the wharf, and had mounted the steep, gray cobbles of Chesley Street, and the door of the waiting house had swung open between its pillars to admit him and had as quickly closed. Mrs. Titcomb remembered passing the still Ingram mansion and looking up to that closed door with a sort of awe, holding her mother's hand the tighter. She was silent now, looking out through her flower-bright bow-window, thinking, perhaps, of a time much later when another battered ship crept in with the bare news that the *Honoria* had been sighted, a derelict in the Agulhas, and that Matthew Titcomb would never make port again.

And now, with all these memories, it was well on into the afternoon before Jane and Mrs. Titcomb realized it, so then Jane must stop for tea. Not in the schoolroom, but in the little, low, front parlor—cinnamon cakes, and candied lemon-peel, and fragrant China tea. And, with it all, something indefinable had happened in the relationship between these two.

"I don't blame you for thinking about it,"

Mrs. Titcomb said, gathering her scarf around her at the windy hall-door, while Jane stood on the step. "Keep your eyes and ears open and your head and heart clear, and you may find her yet."

And, strangely enough, Jane was the most diligent pupil at Mrs. Titcomb's Select School from that day forth.

CHAPTER IV

MARITIME RELICS

FEBRUARY melted into March—melted, truly—and Chesley Street ran rivers, and the wide cornice of the Ingram house dripped rain upon the waiting daffodil-beds beneath. What was left of the winter's scant snow and ice vanished in swiftly-shrinking gray patches here and there about tree roots, and the earth reasserted itself, thinly skimmed with mud above its frozen layers. Tall winds from the sea rose and grew mighty, roaring about the roofs and buffeting the elms till they strewed Chesley Street with wet, crooked twigs. Now and again in the midst of this would come a day unbelievable, when no wind stirred, and the haze across the harbor lay still and blue, and you almost expected crocuses to leap out jubilantly from the borders. But these days were not many and held the false promise of a sea-

port March. For the most part, cold rain locked the harbor in a gray solitude and kept Resthaven dwellers in an isolation of inactivity quite as colorless.

Then, in the town across the bridge, the Historical Society announced a "Loan Exhibition of Maritime Relics." The three young Ingrams, of course, walked to it over the bridge beneath one umbrella—the edges of all of them got rather wet. The permanent collection of the Historical Society was always interesting in itself—queer old cradles and carding-wheels and samplers and pewter—but the "maritime relics" delighted the hearts of the Ingrams beyond measure. For there were walking-sticks made out of whales' bones, elaborately carved on long cruises, and ivory pastry-wheels hooped with Mexican silver and cut with the name of wife or true-love ashore; and there were curious birds made of over-lapping shells, and savage drums, and harpoon barbs, and toggle-irons, and whales' teeth, and cutlasses, and old guns. There were several log-books, open, beneath glass; there were tiny ships inclosed—apparently by some miracle—in small-necked bottles; there was a brass speaking-trumpet,

such as the one Great-grandfather Mark had used to shout his clear, quick orders from the quarter-deck. From the walls above, stiff, ruddy portraits of sea-captains and ship-owners looked down gravely upon these relics of their calling,—a keen-eyed, firm-lipped set of men, sedate in their dark clothes and well-tied stocks.

It was while Mark and Alan were engaged in a lively dispute over the ships in bottles that Jane saw in a corner two or three ship models—a square-set whaler, a dashing brig, and a full-rigged clipper ship with every sail set, even to her lofty moonsail. ". . . Inclusive of the moonsail, that which the *Gloria* has not." Jane drew nearer to peer at the lovely thing from every angle. She screwed herself into the corner and stooped to look at the careful fashioning of the taffrail at the stern. And there, on a dimly golden scroll, was the vessel's name—*Fortune of the Indies, Resthaven.*

Jane's shout brought not only Mark and Alan from the inspection of cutlasses, but also the curator from his musty office and the visitors from two or three rooms. These last stared very hard, rather disappointed, perhaps, to see only a smallish girl in a boy's reefer

leaping before a ship model. Mark and Alan clutched their foreheads melodramatically, crying, "Hallelujah!" and the curator said, "What 's this; what 's this? What *is* this?" looking over his glasses and thrusting a pen behind either ear.

"It 's our ship!" Mark explained, not at all clearly.

"Where did it come from?" Alan asked.

"Whose is it supposed to be?" Jane demanded.

"I don't know what all this is," the curator protested, "but I can look in the record. It 's a loan, you see—a Boston gentleman—a loan —I can look in the record."

"Do, please!" Jane entreated him, almost pushing him into the office.

He consulted a large and rather ancient daybook which looked as though it might itself have been one of the exhibits.

"Here it is," he announced at last, a good deal flurried by peering Ingrams at his shoulder. "Model, clipper ship, *Fortune of the Indies.* Loaned by Mr. Henry B. Bolliver, Brimmer Street, Boston, Mass."

"Thank you," said the Ingrams, and then

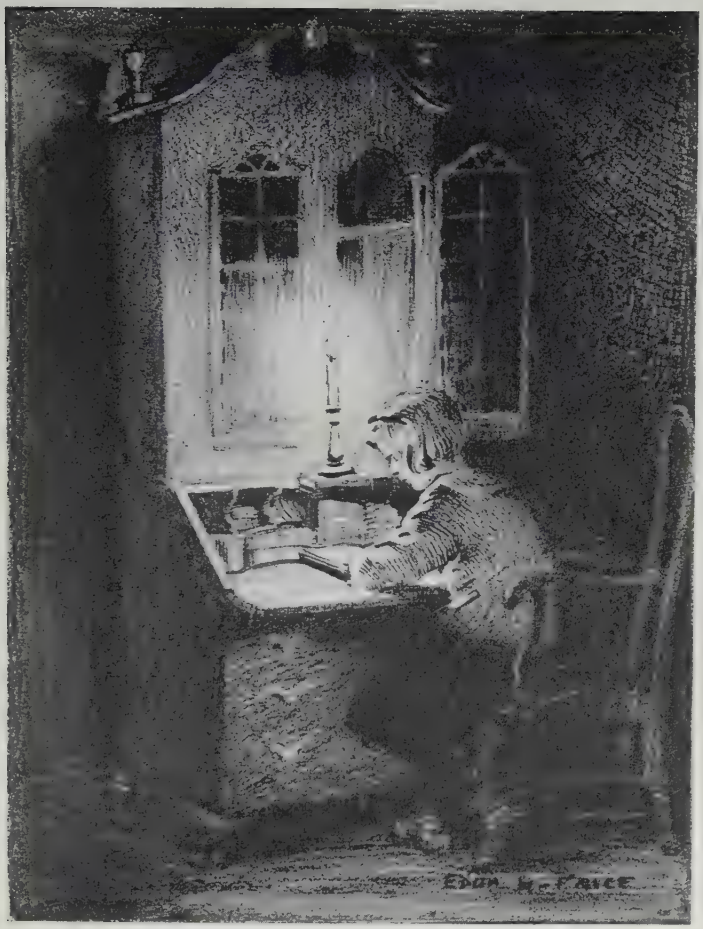
felt rather blank. There really seemed to be nothing more they could do. They could scarcely demand that Mr. Henry B. Bolliver surrender to them something for which he had paid eight hundred dollars, and buy it they certainly could not, even supposing he should wish to part with it.

"Anyway," said Jane, "we can come and look and *look* at it all the time it 's here."

Which she did, practically every day, until Alan suggested that she bring a cot and camp-stool and set up housekeeping in the wing of the Historical Society building.

The aunts came, too, and shook their heads gravely and reminded one another of how proudly the model had sailed above the Ingram mantel when the golden scroll was bright and the miniature company flag, with its blue "I" on a white field, was whole and new.

In the seclusion of the office—the most fitting place for the dark deed, for such she considered it—Jane did a daring thing. With a sheet of paper spread resolutely on the old secretary, she wrote a longish letter to Mr. Henry Bolliver. It was, she considered, a very



In the seclusion of the office Jane did a daring thing

tactful letter. She told, at some length, the tale of the model—its origin and disappearance—expressed the keen interest the present Ingrams felt in discovering it in the exhibition, and hinted vaguely at a hope of future Ingrams being able, perhaps, to buy it back into the family. This last was so veiled in rhetoric that Jane, reading it over and over by candle-light, felt sure that Mr. Bolliver would take no offense, yet might gather an idea that there existed rightful owners who lived in hope.

Jane put her letter into an envelope and, after some consideration, sealed it with the carnelian seal on which was graved "M. I." and the sailing ship. This, she decided, would establish her identity beyond doubt and convince Mr. Bolliver that at least she was no impostor. She stole out hatless at the garden-door, posted her letter before she had time to reconsider, and spent the waking moments of that night in the pleasantly uneasy frame of mind of one who has launched a secret venture.

Leisurely days went past, and Mrs. Titcomb visited the Historical Society's exhibition and came away reminiscent and admiring. Jane went about with a piercing stare for every

postman and an occasionally tripping heart buttoned under her reefer. The letter did come at last, however, and Jane bore it breathlessly to her sanctum, the office. This envelope also boasted a seal—a square blue one with a flying-fish on it—and it was addressed in a courtly but difficult hand. As it was a rather important letter in many ways, it had best be given here in full.

BRIMMER STREET,
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS.
March Twentieth.

Miss Jane Ingram,
Ingram Mansion,
["Now how did he know that?" thought Jane.]
Chesley Street, Resthaven.

MY DEAR JANE INGRAM: It is not very often in an old man's life that a very pleasant and wholly surprising event comes to rouse him from a chronic nap. Your letter, however, did exactly that to your most faithful servant, who may, perhaps, be able to equally surprise you.

For you shall know that I sailed to China with your grandfather Mark, in the *Gloria*—her last voyage to Eastern seas (she never spread canvas again after that cruise). Your grandfather was then a man of thirty-odd, and I was a young chap

going out to take a clerkship in the tea business. I lived in China for a great many years. But I stopped for a night at Ingram Mansion—the night before the *Gloria* sailed—and I remember well that most gallant old house and two very charming young ladies—sisters of your grandfather—who entertained me with the most winning hospitality. There was a wealth of wisteria in bloom above the fine doorway, and I can quite easily see the young ladies standing, framed by it, on the portico as they waved their hands in farewell to their brother and your faithful servant.

[Jane at this point covertly peeped at the last page to see if there was any mention of the ship model, but, seeing nothing of it, hastily turned back.]

A great many years have not served to obliterate the delightful impression of that quiet town and its residents. On the long voyage out I acquired for your grandfather a very deep esteem and respect, and I learned much of as fine a family of shipowners and seamen as ever sailed in the finest of trades.

I cannot tell you how much pleasure it gives to an old shellback such as myself to find among the thoughtless and forgetful younger generation any one so sincerely wrapped up in good old things as you, my dear young lady. Will you be so kind as to extend the regards of that probably forgotten young man of long ago to your aunts—I think they

were Miss Nelly and Miss Lucy, were they not?—and believe me most cordially and gratefully,

Your humble servant,

HENRY BARTHOLOMEW BOLLIVER.

"And not a word, not *one* word, about the *Fortune of the Indies!*" Jane said aloud.

Miss Lucia happened to be passing the office-door at that moment, and came in to find out why her grand-niece was soliloquizing. So Jane gave a hasty explanation and thrust the letter at her aunt.

"My dear! To write to a stranger!" protested Miss Lucia, adjusting her spectacles.

"But he is n't a stranger," Jane countered, inspired. "Just read it and see!"

Aunt Lucia did read it, and called Aunt Ellen, and they grew quite pink-cheeked and laughed with small thin chirps of amazed pleasure. They remembered the young man very well, it seemed, and had quite forgotten his name, except that he was called "Bart" in those days.

"You had on a lavender silk frock—do you remember, Ellen? —and he said you looked like a wisteria blossom come to life."

"O Lucia!" Miss Ellen protested; "and he

kissed your hand, and Mark dipped the pennant for us. It was the *Gloria's* last voyage. 'Miss Nelly and Miss Lucy'! Oh, how odd it seems, my dear!"

Jane, standing beside the secretary, felt suddenly extremely young and as though the letter were no longer her letter at all. She was trying to picture gently-faded little Aunt Ellen in a lavender silk frock laughing among the wisteria flowers on their very same doorstep. And then, queerly enough, she felt immensely old and somehow very sorry, and flung her arms suddenly around both the old ladies.

"O Aunties!" she cried. "Oh, I wish it were then!" and came more near to crying then she usually did.

But all this, though quite fascinating as a discovery, threw no more light than ever on the *Fortune of the Indies,* and the exhibition was to close in a week.

"Then it 'll go back to Boston, and we 'll never never see it again," Jane mourned to her brothers. "If he 'd only said that his heirs and assigns forever would see that it was sold to nobody but an Ingram, at least!"

"Well, he did n't," Alan said. "You ought

to be jolly glad you 've seen as much of it as you have, and that such a nice old chap has it, instead of some bloated lubber of a profiteer."

With which sage counsel Jane strove to console herself.

CHAPTER V

MR. BOLLIVER

THE attic of the Ingram mansion was a place of wonder. It was dim and cornery, and smelled of leather and wood and spice and camphor and old fabrics, and a little of ships, too. It was full of horsehair-covered trunks and old bandboxes, and the odds and ends of a hundred years. And there were two stout ironbound sea-chests with "M. I." branded on their lids with a red-hot marlinespike. There were letters written from the ends of the earth. Some of them, bound with faded ribbon, were from the first Mark Ingram to his betrothed, and these Jane did not disturb. She had once read the top one, and had felt for days as though she had sorely wounded the family honor. But there were others, in loose sheaves, that told of Chinese pirates and typhoons, Malay men and strange ports and

cargoes. Jane's imagination ran like fire between the brown lines and filled in the stiff quaint words with shining images. There were letters, too, from shipboard, augmenting the stilted log with a few fair pictures.

. . . To-day the *Titania* stood up to us for a race, coming handily down on our quarter, but you may imagine we could scarcely let our *Fortune* be beat by a Marblehead packet. I let the men, who were eager, crack on all sail, it being a stiff breeze, and before dark we lost the *Titania,* hull-down to eastward, and reached Torres Straits two days before her.

So wrote Great-grandfather Mark, with veiled pride, in the year 1848. So, also, read Jane, gloatingly, straining her eyes, as usual, in the dim light of one clouded lunette.

. . . To-day we spoke the *Gloria,* homeward bound, and stood off and on whilst Mark came aboard, he having business with me. He has done well, but contemplates touching at Borneo, which I advise against. However, the young ventures often succeed. I shall not say him nay. He will bear you this letter, for he will see Resthaven sooner than I, and by him I send some few trinkets for my dear little maids.

Many such "trinkets" still clustered upon

cabinet-shelves in the drawing-room now, perhaps the very ones great-grandfather spoke 'of here. Curious sandalwood toys whose spiciness had almost worn away, bits of ivory, lacquered boxes, gilded dolls, and cloisonné beads—row on magic row they showed dimly behind their prisoning glass. It was only on Sunday afternoons that Jane might open the glazed doors, whose key Aunt Ellen kept beneath her pincushion upstairs, and really touch these strange delightful things. On weekdays they seemed to have shrunk back behind the glass—dream-things communing with themselves. On Sundays they could emerge and wake and breathe their tale of the wonder of a ship coming in—of foreign, corded boxes in a staid New England hallway; of two little girls in pantalets, trying to keep their excitement discreet; of a brown captain-brother cutting cord with a bowie-knife, and a smell of musk and the dry grass that precious things were packed in.

How could Jane know it all? Had the aunts, drowsing after their Sunday dinner, told her more than she realized? Yet the mere telling could not have made it so vivid.

Jane usually visited the attic when rain made of it a place thrumming with soft sounds and the cobwebby lunettes were even further dimmed by trickling drops. The roof and the rain were very near; the elm-tops creaked and swayed close without. Chesley Street was invisible, infinitely far below, it seemed. The gray glimpses of harbor through the small, curved panes were distant and unreal. It was a dim little world in itself, the attic, far from the rest of the house, separated from it, surely, by much more than the steep, dark stairs which led to it.

On this occasion it was not raining, but Jane was alone in the house, her aunts being out to tea and her brothers tramping. The house was hers, below her, empty and silent; she felt herself in full command. She turned her attention to the contents of one of the trunks and prepared to impersonate some Ingram ancestor. Usually it was Grandfather Mark's gold-buckled belt and stout sea-boots which she donned, for she scorned the feminine furbelows in the bandboxes. But to-day she decided, with a sudden whim, to fit herself into crinoline, and, after some struggling, stepped

forth arrayed in yards of soft white flounces, with a straw spoon-bonnet upon her head.

For the moment she was the first Mrs. Mark tripping down to Ingram Wharf, where lay the *Fortune of the Indies,* newly off the ways and not yet ready to sail on her first voyage. Jane had reconstructed this scene in a dozen different aspects, but she brought to her little play-acting to-day a more vivid picture of the *Fortune* herself than she had ever before conceived, thanks to the Exhibition of Maritime Relics. She knew the model by heart; in imagination she could magnify it and set it alongside Ingram Wharf. She could see the shining new gear and the lean clipper hull that had caused Resthaven seamen to wonder and some to shake their heads. For the tales that began to be abroad of the miraculous achievements of the new ships were still scarcely believed, and Eastern seas were not yet white with the towering sails of Yankee clippers, racing every mile from home under their staggering load of canvas. No, Resthaven had doubted, but Mark Ingram's wife had never doubted, or so her great-granddaughter believed.

Jane led by the hand an imaginary little Mark, all wonder to see his father's ship. He would want to explore every inch of it. His phantom feet pattered expectantly across the shining deck. He would want to climb into places dangerous for a little Mark to be in. His father would laughingly pull him back by the tail of his nankeen jacket, and point out to him the crow's-nest aloft, and lift him up to strike the hour upon the burnished ship's bell. Then Jane extended her hand to the imagined Captain Mark, and jumped daintily down from a low hatch-coaming—which rôle was played by a trunk. Just as she slipped her hand within the captain's arm and looked up, up, in happy awe, at the lofty mainmast, a bell pealed faintly from somewhere in the hold. If the *Fortune of the Indies* had been a steamship, it might have been the engine-room bell, but this happened to be nothing more nor less than the door-bell of the Ingram mansion. The young Mrs. Mark gave way abruptly to a disconcerted Jane, who fumbled at the antiquated hooks, buttons, and loops, and could not at all get out of her costume. As she struggled, the bell rang again, and she ran

downstairs, holding up her crinoline and tripping over ruffles.

"I 'll have to peep out and see," she thought. "Mercy, where *does* the miserable thing unfasten?"

Before she reached the hall, however, the waiting caller tried the knocker, and sent an expert and vigorous double knock echoing into the house.

"They know their business, anyway," thought Jane. "That was a *real* double knock —none of your feeble, lubberly raps."

She intended to open the door only a crack, but no sooner had she unlatched it than the wind caught it out of her hand, and she stood fully visible in her finery—trailing flounces, India shawl, spoon-bonnet, and all. On the doorstep stood a rather small old gentleman with a dry, brown face, and clear, quick, gray eyes under bristling gray eyebrows. In one hand he held a bunch of sweet peas and a walking-stick with a carved ivory head; with the other he now removed his hat.

"*Please* excuse—" began Jane, but the old gentleman was staring at her so hard that she stopped.

"Upon—my—soul!" he cried. "Upon my soul, I really cannot say which you look most like—Mark Ingram, or his sister Nelly!"

"Then you must be Mr. Bolliver!" Jane fairly shouted.

"Your faithful servant," he said, bowing.

"Come in; oh, do!" cried Jane; "and sit down while I go and take off all this. I was just pretending, which is silly, because I 'm supposed to be far too old."

"Why take it off?" Mr. Bolliver asked.

"The aunts would be flabbergasted," Jane explained, "and annoyed. They 're out at tea just now."

" 'Pretending,' " Mr. Bolliver mused, "is just one form of dramatic art, for which the age limit is considerably beyond your years."

This entirely new light on a pastime about which Jane had been much twitted consoled her greatly for past scoffing, but she nevertheless fled upstairs and shortly reappeared in her usual blue jumper. Mr. Bolliver was standing before the fire with his hands behind him.

"Fifty years have changed it very little," he remarked. "Very little. The old house has

the advantage of me; I fear half a century has been less gentle to me."

"That," said Jane, "is where the model of the *Fortune of the Indies* used to hang."

She had not meant to introduce the burning issue quite so abruptly, but there was no help for it now. Mr. Bolliver turned and scrutinized the picture which replaced the ship.

"Ah, yes," he murmured, "a fine old print, quite rare. And that 's another, a delightful one, there beside the cabinet."

With which he stepped firmly across the room to peer at the other engraving. The wind was certainly taken out of Jane's sails. She could scarcely, with courtesy, drag the *Fortune of the Indies* back, stern first, as it were, now that she had been so summarily disposed of as a topic of conversation. So Jane professed an interest in prints and hoped for another chance.

It did not come before there was a fumbling at the latch, the front door swung open, and the two old ladies stood in the hall. Mr. Bolliver gathered up his sweet peas, and, ensconcing himself trimly in the doorway, held them

forth with a courtly bow. It must have been evident that in the quick gray eyes of this old gentleman lurked an unmistakable clear gleam of the young Bart, bound for China. For the aunts held up neatly gloved hands and cried, "O Mr. Bolliver!" with one accord.

There was much bustling then, wherein the little servant, just returned from market, was harried, and Jane nearly tripped over a rug while carrying the majestic Ingram tea-urn, and the aunts' blue eyes filled with anxiety, and Mr. Bolliver knit everything together with helpful jocularity. Then Jane effaced herself with a sugar-cake and listened spellbound to her elders' reminiscent conversation. The aunts, usually concerned with present-day anxieties, and never quite realizing Jane's keen desire to hear tales of the things they could remember, rarely searched their old minds for details so long passed. Now, stimulated by Mr. Bolliver's vivid reminders, and a little excited by his presence, they eagerly exchanged with him their memories of a night half a century before.

Out of the half-spoken disjointed sentences Jane reconstructed the scene. The setting was

the same; she found it more difficult to visualize the actors in the youth that had been theirs.

Bart Bolliver had arrived, it seemed, in the sunset. His boxes went before him to the *Gloria,* borne down Ingram Wharf by sailormen, and he had presented himself and his cowhide bag at the door of the Ingram house. No door-bell such as to-day he had vainly pealed upon—no indeed, he assured them, it was a fine double knock that he rapped out with the great brass knocker. Was it Lucia or Ellen who opened the door to him? They disputed it now between themselves, laughing a little. But Mr. Bolliver remembered—it was Ellen, in the lavender silk frock.

Great-grandmother was alive then, and sat by the window, her fine hands folded upon the lap of her black dress, looking serenely out upon the gilded slope of Chesley Street that ran straight down to the fire of sunset on the harbor. Beside her, Mr. Bolliver recalled, was her candle-stand with the candle and snuffers upon it, and Miss Lucia added that there was surely the Bible and her silver-bowed spectacles, as well. The second Mark's wife was there, too, who was Jane's grandmother, a

sweet-faced, silent, young woman, busy that the Ingram mansion might be in every way hospitable toward its guest.

"There was an old black woman," Mr. Bolliver remembered.

"That would be Amelia, Ellen," Miss Lucia said.

"Ah, such biscuits!" Mr. Bolliver sighed. "I recall thinking, 'I 'll not taste such biscuits in China!' And the planked shad with bacon in him!"

"Fancy remembering what there was for dinner!" Miss Ellen murmured.

"How could I forget? I that was not to eat New England fare for twenty years! Yes, and the bowl of apple-blossoms in the candlelight, and your brother, Mark, asking the grace in his quarter-deck voice."

The drawing-room had been bright with candles that night, and Miss Ellen played upon the piano and Miss Lucia sang. Bart Bolliver had sung, too—this time it was the aunts who reminded him. Such a sweet tenor! Did he ever sing now? No, Mr. Bolliver's singing was over, he told them, like many another thing. Mark Ingram had not been of the gay

party. He was shut in the office, sitting before his father's desk, with his books and papers and cargo-bills before him. When, much later, Bart Bolliver had climbed the gracious stairway to the room he was to sleep in, he saw still the pulsing candle-light through the door-crack of the office. And somewhere below, out there beyond the tall young elms that brushed his window, out there where the harbor spread dark and still, the *Gloria* lay waiting for him, waiting for the dawn-tide that set out to sea and China.

Mr. Bolliver had stayed long in the East. After his apprenticeship, he had become a tea-taster for a great export house—a very curious trade, thought Jane, putting a hesitant question as to the duties of the profession. It appeared that all the fine grades of fragrant China tea must be tested, before being packed and shipped; and Jane had a momentary vision of Mr. Bolliver sipping endless cups of tea, perhaps seated cross-legged upon a mat. Not so; to her surprise she heard that the tea was not really drunk at all. A little of it was poured into a tiny saucer, held in the palm of the hand, and sniffed at judicially; a sip of

it was held in the mouth, but not swallowed. It must have required a person of the most delicate perceptions thus to judge of countless little whiffs of tea. Such a person, apparently, was Mr. Bolliver, however, and the odd business of his early days certainly set him apart with a magical difference from any one Jane had ever before known. Besides tasting tea, however, he had had time for numberless interesting and exciting experiences, had nearly lost his life during the Boxer troubles, and, incidentally, had amassed a large and well-invested private fortune. This fact he did not directly mention, but from his occasional references to the interests he still held in China and also the ease with which he purchased eight-hundred-dollar ship models, Jane drew her own conclusions.

The entrance of the boys, rather muddy and decidedly ravenous, somewhat confused the aunts, who tried to herd them out by the back passage. But Mr. Bolliver haled them in, pressed on them all the remaining sugar-cakes, and plied them with questions of all kinds. Alan, before long, was eagerly outlining his latest project of working his way around the world on a tramp steamer, thereby gaining

much knowledge and material for thrilling books. Mark, it appeared, had decided to go along, in the engine-room—"just for larks."

"And a very good idea, too," said Mr. Bolliver. "I went to sea before I was grown, and to China when I was eighteen. How can you help yourself, Mark Ingram, I should like to know?"

The aunts shook their heads behind the tea-urn. Such ideas, though current in the Ingram family for generations, seemed somehow revolutionary now, in the twentieth century. Though they knew it to be a fact, taken as a matter of family history, you would have had difficulty in convincing them that when their brother, Mark, took command of the *Gloria* he was little more than a year older than their grand-nephew, Mark.

Mr. Bolliver would not accept the hospitality of Ingram mansion for the night. His room, he said, was engaged at the inn, and his bag was already there. So he took himself off down Chesley Street in the twilight—and if he could see, warped in to the rotting Ingram Wharf, a ghost ship of gossamer sails, ready to weigh

for China at dawn, that was nobody's business but his own.

Mr. Bolliver and Jane found a snowdrop in the moist garden next morning—the first snowdrop. The aunts put on their overshoes and came out to see it. It was blooming away, all by itself, under the southwest window of the library. It looked very clear and young and frail and perfect, there in the midst of wet fallen leaves and black earth. During a bleak Northern winter it is easy to forget how luminous and wonderful a flower can be, growing by itself, miraculously, from sodden ground. The aunts stood holding their skirts carefully, and even discreetly sniffed the first warm waking breath of the garden, and smiled.

Jane and Mr. Bolliver repaired later to Ingram Wharf, and there leaned upon piles and talked. Coming spring was on the water, too. Across the harbor weather-beaten freighters, their sides a network of scaffolding, showed brilliant patches of red lead across their stained gray bows. In the wharf-houses, near at hand, men were patching old sails and stitching new

ones, and there was a pervading odor of tar and manila rope abroad. Old men came to lean against piles, even as Jane and Mr. Bolliver were leaning, to stare and sigh aimlessly. Younger ones stood in little groups, running square brown fingers along the newly caulked seams of small boats which lay bottom-up on the shingle, or busying themselves with paint-pot and scraping-knife. New lobster-pots and mended nets were piled beside every wharf-house. April stood at the threshold and summoned Resthaven to sea, as it had always done. In earlier days it had called to deep waters and far lands; there were mighty sails to be spread and great anchors to weigh. Now it led only to the stake-net and lobster-pot a mile or two down-harbor—yet the lure was the same, and in spring Resthaven still turned to the sea.

Jane and Mr. Bolliver felt it as they stood on the gray, hewn timbers of Ingram Wharf and looked at far sails beyond the harbor-mouth and faint smoke at the earth's edge.

"I 'd do it all again," Mr. Bolliver said, half to himself. "I 'd give much to slip fifty years

from me and see the *Gloria* waiting for me again. I 'd go with her—yes, gladly—and live it all over."

(Oh, the harbor smell, and the water at the wharf-piles, and the lift of those sails far out! Would Mr. Bolliver have thought the same if he had stayed in his bow-front brick house in Boston, instead of venturing out against the spring in Resthaven?)

"Do you think the *Gloria* was as beautiful as the *Fortune of the Indies?*" Jane asked him. (Think of talking to a man who had sailed in the *Gloria!*)

"If the *Fortune* was as beautiful as her model," Mr. Bolliver said, "the *Gloria* could not match her—though she was a fine ship, a very fine ship, and quick in stays. The *Fortune* was a tricksy witch, your grandfather used to say. I think every one believed that no one but your great-grandfather could manage her. But the *Gloria* was a fine weatherly ship."

"Don't you think the model is very wonderful?" Jane's second question, this, which she hoped was tactful.

"Yes," said Mr. Bolliver, "quite wonderful. I am very proud and happy to own it."

With which he gazed complacently down-harbor, and Jane was once more dead in the wind's eye. She was not altogether sure what she had hoped he would do, but she fancied that he might bow and say:

"Rest assured, my dear young lady, that full provision will be made whereby none but an Ingram will eventually be allowed possession of the model."

But no such thought was in his mind, apparently, and Jane decided that she was impolite and grasping, anyway, and gave herself up to the pleasure of hearing reminiscences of that last departure for the East, fifty years before.

How tall the *Gloria* had looked in the dawn when Bart Bolliver stood just where he now stood on Ingram Wharf; and how the little boys waved their caps and the young ladies their lace handkerchiefs; and how the *Gloria* swung out under her headsails and got the tide under her and slipped downchannel; and how, one by one, the Resthaven lights went out in the daybreak, and the wind freshened, and the *Gloria* spread sail after sail, and the water ran swithering along her side and leaped at her

forefoot. And how Mark Ingram stood on the quarter-deck with his arms folded, and now and again a low word to the helmsman; and how, once he had dipped the pennant, he never looked back to Resthaven, but out and out to China; and, on the other hand, how young Bart stared and stared ever and again back over the bubbling wake to the gray shore-line.

So Jane Ingram hung spellbound on the quick, low words of this little old gentleman, and now and then sighed prodigiously.

"Oh, it 's all true!" she cried at last. "It 's true, and it was you who did it. Oh, I never thought I 'd ever see any one who 'd really done it."

"And," said Mr. Bolliver, "I 've not been in Resthaven since that morning, nor set foot on this wharf since I left it for the deck of the *Gloria.*"

So Mr. Bolliver took his departure—this time in a modern taxicab—and the Ingrams sorrowed and besought him to come often. And Jane so mourned his loss that she quite forgot his appropriation of the model and the fact that the Historical Society's exhibition of maritime relics closed that day without her having taken a last look at the *Fortune of the Indies.*

CHAPTER VI

A SHIP DROPS ANCHOR

THE snowdrop was a nice thing. It was speedily joined by three others, and these took some of Jane's attention next day. The thick, choking, autumn leaves must be pushed back from the small pale stems, and while she was at that business it was quite natural to do a good deal of poking at all the beds, to partly uncover a lot of small green adventurers, jubilant at seeing the sun. Thus it was that Jane was in the garden, very damp as to boots and muddy as to fingers, when the door-bell rang without her hearing it. The aunts were taking naps, so the small servant, as silently as might be, took the matter in her own hands. When a man drove off again, whistling, Jane —also whistling—was still in the garden.

She came in at tea-time, to find her brothers standing in the hall looking at something.

"What 's in your box, old lady?" Mark inquired.

"What box?" said Jane, pushing out of her eyes a wisp of hair which had escaped the blue string.

"My stars, if you could see what you did to your face!" Alan commented.

Jane regarded a muddy thumb dubiously, and then blew mightily at the refractory lock, which immediately floated down again, however.

"What box?" she repeated.

"This one," Mark said, stepping aside and kicking it.

To be sure, it was a big box, addressed to Miss J. Ingram.

"Mercy, I never laid eyes on it!" exploded Jane. "Look at the size of it! What in the world? Get something to open it with, somebody!"

"You can't pull it open with your hands," Alan said. "Easy on! We 'll have it open in half a shake with the jimmy."

The aunts, a little short-sighted after their naps, were in the hall now, peeping and

wondering, and cautioning against excelsior all over the rug. But there was no excelsior. Bits of tissue paper began to stick up as Mark scrunched out nail after nail and bent back the boards of the lid. The top of a little black stick protruded from it—and then Jane felt her heart give a queer bob that made her feel weak all over.

"Let me! Let me!" she begged. "Oh, it *can't* be!"

But, as she groped down into the box, her hands knew—all tangled in the packing, but unmistakable—down the tall mast, the moonsail, the skysail, the royal, the topgallant, the topsails, the main course—and at the stern, she knew, a dimly golden scroll on which was carved, *Fortune of the Indies, Resthaven.*

Even the aunts could not protest at the wild way in which paper flew about the hall now. They stood patting one another's arms and watching the mad young shouting Ingrams uncovering bit by bit the lost model, knocking out the cleats that held it fast. Then Jane untied from the spanker-boom a small envelope, and whipped out the card within.

After many wanderings, what ship is not rejoiced to find her voyages ended and to slip back gently to her home port? The *Fortune of the Indies* lies fathoms deep in far waters, but her little image returns to drop anchor at Ingram Wharf and to put herself under the special command of Captain J. Ingram.

There was no signature, but none was needed. The aunts, who were old, wept a little, and Jane merely remained on her knees where she had dropped to investigate the box, till Mark and Alan had each to seize an arm and beg her to "come out of it."

The reinstatement of the ship above the mantel was rather a state occasion. It was done after supper, with some ceremony. The "rare old print" was banished, and Mark and Alan, assisted by Jane and a step-ladder, installed the *Fortune of the Indies* in its old place. Then they lighted the candles in the sconces at either side and all sat in a row on the davenport, staring till you would have thought them daft. Jane's letter to Mr. Bolliver was written that night in the office. It was more sincere than coherent, and filled sheet after sheet with ecstatic scribbling which

grew larger and larger and more and more earnest toward the end of the letter.

And much later that night, when she was supposed to be sensibly asleep in bed, Jane woke in the moonlight and got up. She took the blankets from her bed and went cautiously downstairs with them. She curled herself up on the davenport and turned her face to the lovely lost ship. The moonlight shimmered through the small long panes and silvered the sails. So Jane slept.

I wish I could record that simultaneously with the return of the *Fortune of the Indies* came a turn in the fortunes of the Ingrams. This, however, was not the case. Each young Ingram nursed a wholly secret and somewhat shamefaced hope that this might be so, and that a hitherto unknown relative might die in India, leaving to them several thousand lakhs of rupees or a few rubies as large as hens' eggs. No such news reached them, unfortunately, and the ship merely continued to hang above the mantel in a proud sort of state, holding her secret, if she had one, with praiseworthy silence. She was religiously dusted each day by her

worshipper, Jane, who flicked a turkey-feather brush at her with as much tenderness and dignity as possible.

So came spring, with the smallest pale leaves on the elm-trees of Chesley Street, and daffodils and hyacinths and squills and crocuses in the border, and forsythia scattering golden bells on the new grass; and then rosy weigelia in stout bold clumps under the office-window, and little pink maple-fingers tapping at Jane's casement. All this was delightful, for spring is nowhere so lovely as in Resthaven, with always a glint of blue harbor between young leaves and the smell of salt mingling with the fragrance of hyacinths. There are wild spring flowers, too—hepatica and anemone in the thin woods inland—and out on Bluff Point, if one has patience to look, all manner of lowly, lovely, green things waking. There is one fine hawthorn out there, too, that holds up a glad armful of pink and white stars to the racing wind.

All this, I say, was delightful; but with the flowers and the first song-sparrows came also the first sea-fogs, very thick and very damp. All the doors in Ingram Mansion stuck fast, as they did every spring, and certain floor-

boards began creaking which had not creaked all winter. Also the *Fortune of the Indies,* after seventy years of knocking about in strange havens without mishap, suddenly swelled and sprung a seam and began to bulge ominously along her bottom planking. Jane discovered it and fled horrified, duster in hand, to the boys, who were having Easter vacation. Mark, who, as I have said, thought of being a ship-builder one day, came to look at the damage; and said that a short time in drydock under his experienced supervision would make the *Fortune* seaworthy once more.

So the step-ladder was brought into play again, and the little ship borne off by Mark to his room, which, despite the aunts' mild protests, still looked more like a carpenter-shop than was seemly. Here, with Jane at his elbow, he investigated the trouble and prescribed the necessary repairs. It was a matter of careful pressure and gluing, it appeared, and a section of the inner sheathing must be removed in order to get at the sprung seam. So Mark rolled up his sleeves, pried off the hatch, and plunged his arm into the black and musty hold of the little clipper.

"Dust and *everything*," he commented, groping. "And old pieces of newspaper and junk," he added, clawing out a handful of rumpled paper and dropping it beneath the table. "Now stand by, Jane, and help me."

But Jane had disappeared under the table, whence she spoke indistinctly.

"Wait a minute! I 'm after the paper. It might be old and interesting."

Old it certainly was—yellow and frail. Jane, upright again, was unfolding it carefully.

"It is n't newspaper at all," she said, and then was silent, with a sudden silence that made Mark glance up quickly. He looked over her shoulder.

"My stars!" he said.

For the paper was completely covered with fine characters that looked Chinese, and at the bottom it was signed by the first Mark Ingram in flowing yellow script. Neither dared to guess what it could be. It all seemed too improbable, too like a story-book. They could not even hazard an opinion about a document so romantically found. They flew to the aunts with it, and the aunts put on their spectacles and peered and shook their heads. That it

"It isn't newspaper at all," she said

was really the signature of their father, the first Mark, they knew well enough, but as for the rest, it was quite hopelessly unintelligible.

"Who knows Chinese?"

The question was simultaneously answered.

"Mr. Bolliver must, of course!"

CHAPTER VII

T'ANG MIN BECKONS

MR. BOLLIVER was written to without more delay, and the paper was sent to him special delivery, registered mail, with some trepidation on the part of Jane. Mr. Bolliver did not answer; he came to Resthaven himself, preceded by a terse telegram. There was a sort of curious guarded elation about him when he did arrive, and a wonderment, too. He came up the flagged path from Chesley Street with the swift, still foot-fall of a dream. So thought Jane, watching for him from the drawing-room window, clothing him instantly with the aspect of a magical messenger. She was not disappointed. She flew to meet him, down the steps, and found his whole manner one of secrecy and surprise.

"You have not waited and watched for nothing, little Jane," he said, and left her wonder-

ing whether he meant her looking for him just now down Chesley Street or her long vigil over the *Fortune of the Indies.*

The boys were close behind Jane; the aunts got as far as the doorway, trying not to show any signs of curiosity or impatience. So that the whole existent Ingram family surrounded Mr. Bolliver upon his entrance, and contained themselves with difficulty while he turned over his hat, stick, and overcoat to Mark.

When they were all assembled in the drawing-room, he looked upon them soberly.

"I feel," he said, "as though I were taking part in the sort of story one always thinks not quite probable."

He glanced up at the model of the *Fortune,* sailing on her endless voyage above the mantel. Jane's eyes followed his. Her heart beat violently. In the waiting silence of the room the grandfather-clock in the hall could be heard ticking ponderously. It whirred, rumbled, and struck eleven with resonant deliberation. Mr. Bolliver waited until its vibrance died. Then he put on his eye-glasses, looped the ribbon of them out of his way, and

produced two or three papers from his pocket.

"I have been at great pains," he said, "to make sure of a true translation of this thing. It's in a sort of Mandarine, very complex and beautiful. Here is what it says, as nearly as English can give it."

He looked quickly around at his transfixed audience over the rim of his glasses, and cleared his throat.

" 'The cherry petal falls each spring upon the stone of the court-yard, but next year it blooms again in fresh beauty. So is renewed gratitude in the heart of T'ang Min, who will not forget.

" 'How auspicious the day, how gentle the winds, when the golden dragon-ships of T'ang Min set forth! They are laden with the treasures of human desire. The jade and pearls weigh down the dragon-ships; they are bright with silk and gold and fragrant with spices. How vile is the nature of man! The dragon-ships are beset by sea-robbers; these orange sails are the sails of pirates. The greatest of the dragon-ships sinks under the green jade water. With it goes the wealth of

T'ang Min. On the lesser ship many robbers fight with curved swords.

"'Then comes the Western ship, like a moving cloud of white blossoms, the ship of many thunders. Upon it is the friend of T'ang Min, the honorable and gracious Ingram, long known as a merchant respected in all these waters. Swiftly the white ship cleaves the jade water; ruddy thunders break from her tall bows. The great Ingram comes upon the dragon-boat and with his own hand fights the robbers with sword and the lesser thunder. It is the infinite happiness of T'ang Min to deliver the esteemed Ingram from the vile blow behind of the robber captain, who is about to send the Captain Ingram to meet his ancestors. This is a small thing and a great happiness. The gratitude should not be the loved Ingram's, but T'ang Min's. But the fortune of T'ang Min is lost. How is he, then, to pay his honor debt to the Prince Hsai within the allotted time? The ever blessed Ingram therefore has lent to T'ang Min the sum of two hundred thousand taels. And T'ang Min begs that it be repaid to the gracious Ingram, or to his descendants, as soon as the fortunes

of T'ang Min blossom again. May he live always in the light of eternal rest and happiness. Huen Su T'ang Min.' "

Some one there in the still Ingram parlor started to speak, but Mr. Bolliver raised his hand and went on:

" 'Dictated by Mark Ingram to the lesser scribe:

" 'T'ang Min is too generous. He fails to state that though it is true M. Ingram came to his aid with his ship the *Fortune of the Indies,* that T'ang Min, in saving Ingram's life, received, himself, a wound which may yet prove to be fatal. I cause this to be written. Mark Ingram. September 13, 1850.' "

The aunts were trying hard to understand it all. Jane was crouched beside Mr. Bolliver, a thousand questions racing through her mind. Mark and Alan stood staring at one another. Outside, beyond the half-drawn curtains, a commonplace cart rattled by on Chesley Street. It was, after all, Aunt Lucia who spoke first.

"But—but I don't understand how this can be," she said.

"Why didn't he *tell* anybody?"

"Why did he hide the paper away like that,

where nobody ever could find it?" Thus spoke the boys. Then Aunt Ellen:

"A sea-captain like my father—knowing his life was in peril every time he sailed—to conceal an important document. It seems unbelievable, Mr. Bolliver."

Mr. Bolliver had been gazing out the window, past the cool vines that swung down from the cornice of the portico. He turned back now and folded the papers slowly.

"But he didn't want any one to find it," he said quietly.

"No," said Jane, whose eyes had not once left his face.

Mr. Bolliver looked down at her suddenly.

"You understand it, do you?" he asked. "You would; you 've been living back there, in the spirit, haven't you?" He glanced at the aunts, erect and uncomprehending. "It was a sort of debt of honor, you see," he went on. "I don't know very well how to make you feel it all. I 've lived there. I 've seen things. None of it was a thing he could come back to gray Resthaven and tell his wife about. She wouldn't have understood, either. It was a reckless thing—the sort of thing you

do in the China trade—or rather, you *did,*" he corrected himself. "Putting the paper in the model was almost the same as destroying it, which he did n't quite want to do. He did n't want to remember it or have it found. He thought he would make the money easily on his next voyage."

"And on his next voyage he was lost," said Jane softly.

"You know all those dates," Mr. Bolliver smiled. "Was it, then, his very next?"

"And he could not have guessed, I suppose," said Miss Lucia, "that his other investments would fail."

"Of course not," Mr. Bolliver replied. "That would have made it very different. He never dreamed for an instant that his children and his children's children would suffer. I can see it all—oh, I know it all." And Mr. Bolliver sighed, with his eyes on phantom jade pagodas and the spell of orange junk-sails in the sunset.

"But what 's it all mean now?" asked the practical Mark. "Is it worth anything now, that paper?"

Mr. Bolliver roused himself.

"Eh? Worth anything? Of course it is.

'Or his descendants.' You're Mark Ingram. Certainly. It 's a lawful agreement on the part of T'ang Min. If *his* descendants can be found, there is owing to you two hundred thousand taels, or somewhere around one hundred thousand dollars."

The Ingrams gasped.

"We couldn't take it unless they were very very rich again," Jane murmured, "after *that.*"

"Hark to great-grandfather!" laughed Mr. Bolliver. "What would *you* have done if you 'd stood on the dragon-ship that day, eh, Miss Jane?" He tweaked her hair, and went on without waiting for an answer. "No, Miss Lucy and Miss Nelly, it sounds like a wild tale, but I 've been through wilder, myself. I understand it all. But all you need to understand now is that some Ingram must go to China and claim what belongs to you."

"Such a sum!" Miss Lucia was murmuring. "Father would never have done it, never! There is some mistake. He would not have hidden the paper."

"The New England father you knew," said Mr. Bolliver patiently, "was, no doubt, very

different from the 'Captain Ingram' of Chinese waters. That 's neither here nor there. The point is that I 've written to my firm in Shanghai, and they will be all ready to help Mark and Alan in every way."

"Mark and Alan!" The voices which repeated the names were rather blank.

"Yes, when they go out to attend to the matter."

"Mark and Alan go to China?" Miss Ellen had risen. "O Mr. Bolliver, that 's impossible. They 're only children—and besides, traveling—the expense—"

"That 's the least part," Mr. Bolliver said, casting an eye at the boys, who were wordlessly punching one another in a corner. "Your brother, Mark, went to sea when he was fourteen; he was commanding his own ship before he was twenty-one. This Mark is seventeen—going toward eighteen, is n't he? No school in summer, anyway. I can get berths —almost have 'em, in fact—wireless-man and oiler. Is n't that what I understood you wanted, boys? Casual merchant ship—New York to Shanghai—through the Canal—all over the place—lots of experience. An In-

gram *has* to go. Would *you,* Miss Lucy? Jane can't, unfortunately."

Miss Ellen had sat down again, possibly because she was incapable of standing. Jane flung herself upon the old ladies.

"But it 's all arranged!" she cried. "You *must* let them!"

The aunts were weeping, with all sorts of mixed feelings, and Mark and Alan stepped forth from their corner and stood very straight before Mr. Bolliver.

"We're all ready to go, sir," said Mark, "whenever you say."

Mr. Bolliver laughed.

"Not so fast," he said. "Finish school—not long, now—and take good care of your aunts (I 'll talk to them a little later)—and don't let Jane stow away, because it would complicate things afterward."

Jane had vanished. She had fled to the office to search and search a certain log-book for some mention of this fairy-tale. And she found just enough to verify that extraordinary document.

Sept. 2, 1850. Made Hangchow Bay, light wind S. by W. Went to assistance of merchant junk

attacked by native pirates, we discharging the bow-chaser several times.

From the front of the house came the murmur of Mr. Bolliver's voice, persuasively, to the aunts. Upstairs in the boys' room there was a frantic clatter of boots. Jane closed the log-book and sat looking out into the waking garden—just where Great-grandfather Mark had sat and looked and smiled a straight blunt smile as he thought of dragon-junks with peacocks' eyes at the prow and cargoes of mandarin silk and jade and jewels.

Mr. Bolliver, Jane thought, must possess some sort of Oriental magic. For who but he could have won the aunts to even a half-hearted consent that the boys should set out? The spring days passed like an extraordinary dream—all the everyday commonplace life was laced with a mystic network of preparation and excitement. Alan spent his evenings polishing his knowledge of wireless and poring over scientific books. He already possessed a good deal of speed and skill as a Marconi operator, and before the war had come to put a stop to all amateur wireless he had boasted an

aërial of his own. As for Mark, he passed all his spare time in the engine-rooms of the loading freighters across the bay, and came home late, talking eagerly of crossheads and guides, eccentric sheaves and thrust-blocks.

And so presently it came to seem as though it were the most natural thing in the world for the boys to go to China, and as if they had always been going. China came much nearer than it had ever seemed to be when thought of in terms of slow-sailing ships, and even the aunts began talking, in Resthaven, of how the boys were going to "run over to Shanghai to attend to some business."

"A very good thing, *I* should say," said Mrs. Titcomb, over the tea-cups. "A Mark Ingram who *did n't* go to China in his teens would be an odd chick in that family."

So that when the day really did arrive, late in June, it seemed like something that was only the outcome of long expectation. Mark and Alan left late in the afternoon, for they were going by train to Fall River, there to take the boat for New York. Mr. Bolliver went with them; he said he had business in New York. Mr. Bolliver's affairs always agreed most mir-

aculously with the needs of the Ingrams. The boys, each with their modest hand-luggage, stood on the stone step of Ingram Mansion, rather solemn in the sunset. The aunts were too much wrapped up in the present to think of the other Marks, sailing to the Orient from the wharf at the end of Chesley Street, but Mr. Bolliver thought of it, and perhaps Jane did, too. She kissed the boys very hard, and they let her, and Mark said gruffly, "Wish you were coming along, too, old girl," and Alan said, "We 'll write from everywhere," and the aunts cried, "You 're sure you have *all* your socks, Mark?"

But then the taxicab that had come across the bridge stood chugging below, and the boys turned and ran suddenly down the steps. The aunts stood and waved their little lace handkerchiefs. The wisteria had long ceased blooming, and the sun was setting now, but Mr. Bolliver waved his hand and the taxicab bumped off over the cobbles. Mark's face showed for a moment at the little window in the back. Then the taxicab was gone and Chesley Street was very still. The elms sighed a little and a ship's bell sounded somewhere down-harbor. The sun was very nearly gone, and only the last

penetrating gold lay across the pillars of Ingram Mansion. The aunts went slowly into the house, lifting their gray skirts as they climbed the curved stone steps. Jane lingered a moment, looking at Ingram Wharf and seeing nothing at all. Then she too went in, and Ingram Mansion was very quiet. It was a matter of no surprise to it that a Mark Ingram should be leaving it for the East.

CHAPTER VIII

THE DELPHIAN

HIGH and gray the *Delphian* lay at her pier in the North River, with her big cargo-hatches open and a confusion of stevedores stowing the last of her cargo. She was quite new, and compared with the battered and dingy tramps of Resthaven Harbor, she looked like a magnificent ocean liner. It was drizzling a little; the New York skyline was a monotone of slate color and the buildings lost cloudy tops in the mist. Mr. Bolliver went aboard with Mark and Alan, and in the captain's comfortable quarters they all talked of this and that for nearly an hour. Mark had all his papers and a note-book almost half full of advice and instructions from Mr. Bolliver, and the boys felt by this time as though Shanghai lay at their feet. Mr. Bolliver put a hand on the shoulder of each and said, "Don't disappoint any of us," and was gone.

It was nearly time for the *Delphian,* also, to be gone. While Mark was changing into dungaree in his quarters and Alan stood beside the young chief Marconi man in the wireless-room, there came a premonitory shiver and a throbbing throughout the ship, and a rushing of steam and shouting from the dock, and she thrashed a great seething mass of lemon-green water astern. A tug was helping her into the river, fussing very close to her with tremendous puffings and sizzlings. At last she floated out, heading down-stream, and passed gravely across the harbor, and New York lost her as she steamed slowly into the Narrows with her nose seaward.

Mark's first watch was not until midnight, but he went to the engine-room at once to report, and then to listen and look and learn. Up in the wireless-room, perched above the bridge-deck, Alan was having his first practical experience. He had caught many a flying message before this, but he suddenly felt hugely responsible and rather frightened as he fastened the microphone over his head and realized that he was, for the time, the ears of the ship. And then came her code-call. The blue sparks leapt,

the chief murmured, "All right, I 've got 'em, too. Take it, boy," and Alan flashed back with the *Delphian's* answering signal. Then the message came:

New York 3:22 P.M. Mark and Alan Ingram. Good Luck. Godspeed. H. B. Bolliver.

Sandy Hook had dimmed to a gray gleam astern; ahead there was nothing at all but slatey sea, with the last bay-gulls screaming and dropping back. Alan felt as though Mr. Bolliver's hand had reached out from that gray line and clapped him again on the shoulder. It was an instant before he could acknowledge the message, for China, at that moment, did not seem so near, across the dull water.

Mark went on his first watch fifteen minutes before eight bells. He was perfectly aware that the eye of the first assistant engineer was firmly on him, but he decided to behave as though he had been an oiler all his life. Before the watch was called he was busily employed seeing that the journals were running cool, feeling the crossheads and guides, and descending to touch the great flying crankpin with that peculiar swinging motion of the hand that he had

practised diligently. He saw that enough oil was ready for the watch, and turned up as eight bells was striking to report, with a grin, to his chief.

"You 're in a fair way to learn your trade, son," drawled the engineer. "I noticed you felt only one side of the crankpin brasses, but I guess you 'll feel *both* sides *next time.*"

"I surely will, sir!" said Mark, and departed to the shaft-alley.

The shaft-alley is a strange place, hooded over with steel barely head high. Nothing lives there but the shaft, turning ceaselessly by itself, and the thrust-blocks working away. Mark had been in plenty of shaft-alleys on Resthaven freighters, but then the ships were anchored, the propellers still. Now, as he went on toward the stern to look at the tail-shaft stuffing-box, he realized how near he was to a whole sea outside. Water beat around with strange, hollow sounds; the big screw plunged and swirled just beyond the echoing steel walls. The water-noises were insistent; Mark had suddenly the feeling of being imprisoned in a narrow tube which was tumbling down through wild seas. The shaft-alley somehow was very remote and

not a very jolly place, he decided. He was glad to come back to the bright engine-room, to the big, stamping engines, and the hot, common-place figures of his comrades on watch.

The engine-room, on a summer night, is not the coolest of places. It is not quite so hot as the fire-room, Mark reflected philosophically, but he decided that he was nearly as warm and active as the crossheads, and quite as oily. He went on deck at four o'clock, when the morning watch was called, and stood for a little while at the rail before turning in. There was not a star, not a gleam from the *Delphian's* wake—nothing but a blanket of moist cool darkness filled with the whisper of the ship's way. He glanced up at the wireless-room and wondered if Alan was off watch or on, and at the dark wheel-room, where the silent quartermasters were pointing the *Delphian* on down the coast. Mark walked across the deck to the starboard side and saw, far off, the fixed white gleam of a lighthouse, and wondered what light it was and how far on her way to Shanghai the *Delphian* had churned. Then, yawning tremendously, he tumbled to his own little cubicle, where his shore-clothes, not yet in their locker,

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swung rhythmically from a hook. The porthole showed a slip of sky that waited already for the dawn.

With surprisingly quick adjustment, life on the *Delphian* soon became the actuality and Resthaven seemed like a gray dream ten thousand miles astern. As the ship would not make any port until she reached the Canal, there was no mail to be received nor letters dispatched, and the boys lived in an isolated world of new interests, with hardly a thought for the old. At first they kept somewhat to themselves, meeting off watch and discussing their own affairs and their respective duties. But the younger members of the ship's personnel would not allow this seclusion very long. Deck and engine-room met amicably around the battered victrola in the junior officers' quarters, and Mark and Alan learned to play their part in the small social world of the ship, as well as in its business.

The youngest engineer was possessed of a banjo, and made the bridge-deck resound with strains of New York jazz. Somehow, it was discovered that Mark could sing, in a voice

just settling to a fine baritone, and he was more in demand than his modesty relished. Resthaven is not very learned in the latest jazz. Mark sang chanteys that his great-grandfather's men had roared as they tramped around the capstan, and the syncopated singers of the *Delphian* listened, approving and impressed, and admitted that "those old fellows sure did know how to sling the harmony." The youngest engineer tamed his instrument sufficiently to pick out somber chords in accompaniment to "Bony was a Warrior" and "Old Stormalong," and a new musical craze swept the *Delphian,* even reaching to the ears of the silent captain in his chintz-curtained cabin.

But songs claimed the least part of shipboard days. Alan, in his little high-perched cubicle, hung fascinated above his wireless instruments while the silent, unseen sound-waves flung forth their mysterious antennæ over the sea. Mark, in the engine-room or out of it, studied and pondered continuously, his head filled with "lap and lead," the pitch and slip of a screw, and the thousand intricacies of the big triple expansion engine. He almost forgot, perhaps, the errand that had made an oiler of him, and

lived only in the present with its new, absorbing occupations.

It had been rumored about the ship, however, through those mysterious channels by which news runs, that the young Ingrams were bound on a quest of untold fortune appropriated by wily mandarins. Mark, laughingly denying this in the engineers' mess, met suddenly the narrow eyes of Chun Lon, the mess-boy, who was passing him the potatoes. Just a swift, inscrutable, black gleam—wholly impersonal—but somehow Mark felt all at once a cold, discouraging premonition of the kind of people he must deal with before he reached the descendants of T'ang Min and claimed his two hundred thousand taels. He spoke gloomily of his feeling to Alan, whom he met off watch that afternoon.

"Not like dealing with regular civilized people," he said. "That is, in some ways they 're *too* civilized, if you know what I mean."

"I don't," said Alan.

"They can know such a lot without letting on that they do or saying anything at all," Mark continued; "or they certainly look as if they did."

"We 've never come across any Chinks but laundrymen and mess-boys and such," said Alan. "Perhaps aristocracy is different."

"They 'd be even *more* civilized," sighed Mark, shaking his head.

Suddenly, unbelievably to the boys, the *Delphian* was in tropic waters. Patches of gulf-weed floated by, just below the surface of the immense smooth swell, a swell so vast that though the ship rolled to it, eye could scarcely see the climbing crest of the next great polished roller. Flying-fish skipped and skimmed above a sea incredibly blue; the Ingrams felt that they had never before known what blue was till they faced this limitless field of living color. The sky was not very blue; it was pale and shimmering, filled with tremulous heat and bare of cloud, and at night new stars climbed above the *Delphian's* funnels. The nights were as hot as the days—hotter, Mark thought. Clothes were nearly intolerable; the engine-room became a place of torture, and Mark, gasping on deck after a watch, envied Alan in his lofty wireless-room.

They passed among the upper Bahamas at

night, and one morning found the *Delphian* steaming toward the Windward Passage, with strange lands risen suddenly to meet the swift tropic dawn. The sea was not blue now, but deep purple; sometimes a shark's pointed fin flashed and hovered alongside. Unknown islands raised blue spire-like shapes on the horizon, appeared like mirage, to disappear; faintly gold, nebulously blue, ethereal, fantastic mountains poised on the sea-line, shimmering into a hot blur over the wake. Then there was nothing but the violet sea and the strumming of the warm wind about the *Delphian's* rigging as she swung into the Passage, left a gleam of Cape Maisi astern, and steamed into the Jamaica Channel. The dark pulsing reaches of the Caribbean stretched before her. By day the paint cracked on her decks under an empty sky of lilac heat. By night she tossed a welter of unearthly phosphorescence behind her, and her bows writhed with green fire. Above, the Cross swung low, and Dorado smoldered splendidly.

At Colon there was mail, and time to answer it. Long and impassioned scrawls came from

Jane; neat, anxious notes from the aunts; a sage and kindly letter from Mr. Bolliver; an envious word or two from stay-at-home schoolmates. Mark, smiling over Jane's effusion and reading as he walked to his stateroom, collided squarely with Chun Lon, the mess-boy, just outside the door. Chun Lon ducked out of the way with an apologetic grin.

"Confound him!" Mark thought, slamming the door. "What 's he doing here, anyway? I 'm always stepping on him somewhere."

Whereupon he sat down on the edge of his bunk to finish his sister's letter.

CHAPTER IX

JANE AND HER LOG

JANE received the answer to her letter in due time, written all over a number of post-cards depicting the Canal.

"And where will the next be from?" she wondered, spreading the post-cards in a semi-circle around her plate at the breakfast table, to her aunts' gentle annoyance.

But they were being very lenient with Jane just now, and "bothering" about her even less than usual. For they did realize, dimly, how wholly her heart was with the boys on ship-board and how her spirit was far away, flying before them to China. They let her drift and dream, but Mr. Bolliver, who came to Rest-haven quite often now, did not seem to approve of too much dreaming. He made Jane take him for long tramps down the Point—he was a brisk and untiring walker—and he also made

her talk about everything on earth except the *Fortune of the Indies*. On the warm rough grass of Bluff Point they would sit down, and Mr. Bolliver would often produce a book from the wide pocket of his square-cut coat. Then, with the sea-sound in their ears and the gulls whistling above them, they would take turns reading to one another—old sea-lore and golden verse—till the sky mellowed with sunset, and they would hurry home, late for tea.

It was about this time that Jane developed the idea of keeping a journal, or, more properly, a log. That is, she thought it was her idea, and certainly, if it was Mr. Bolliver's, he had introduced it in a most unobtrusive manner. She wrote it in a nearly empty exercise-book, which she covered with canvas that it might look more like a log and less like French Composition. Some of the entries she showed to Mr. Bolliver when he was in Resthaven, and some she didn't, but as many of them were rather illuminating, perhaps we can do no better than to pause and look through the book. The log was kept more or less in proper nautical fashion, and never once neglected to mention the state of the weather and the direction

of the wind. From Jane's window the gilded ship that swung to the wind above the old customs-house cupola could just be seen above the trees, and she consulted it faithfully.

July 18. Comes in clear and hot with a very light wind. S. W. Got up early and picked rasberries in the garden. Everybody else asleep. Had the rasberries for breakfast for a surprise. Met Lydia Fisk on Ash Street wearing a pripostrous hat. She wanted me to go to her house, but I did n't want so did n't. Met Mrs. Titcomb who asked me to come to lunch and I did. It was just her and me. We had it on her little brick porch place behind the house, where you can see the harbor. She has rather different things to eat than we do, and very blue plates. Also black currants which are nice. She had them in a very scallopy glass dish with a lid to it, and some of their leaves too. She has a cat called Monsoon, who does n't come into the schoolroom so I did n't know about him before, but he sat and watched us eat lunch. He is very gray and has orange-colored eyes. Afterward we sat in her little front room because there was a breeze which the garden did n't get, and she told me about different things. I walked home by a long way. The *Delphian* ought to be much more than halfway to Honolulu. We had Indian pudding for supper which is something I don't like *at all*. Ends clear and warm, wind fresher S. W.

July 21. Comes in foggy, breeze setting in S. E. Mr. Bolliver came unexpectedly before lunch. He had a box of guava jelly for the aunts and a book called "Admirals All" for me, which looks frightfully interesting. The guava jelly is queer but nice, having little clear sections in the midst of the rest of it, which is thick and sticky but very good. Eighty years ago to-day the *Fortune* was off the Horn and great-grandfather did n't know exactly how she was going to behave, because it was her first voyage. Everything was freezing up. He had n't even reefed a sail till then, but on July 21 he reefed the topsls. This afternoon the fog went out and Mr. Bolliver got a victoria somewhere or other and took the aunts driving. I sat on the little seat—rather bumpy and backwards. We drove as near Bluff Point as you can get by the road and then out by Leander Road and the Arch Pike, which was nice, and further than I generally get to by walking. The surf was not much, but the sea was rather nice and choppy and the wind freshening. It blew Aunt Ellen's parasol right inside out which was too bad, but there really was n't enough sun for her to be carrying it anyway. Mr. Bolliver is staying all night. I put a big bunch of minionette in his room because he said he liked it. I don't see why it would have been so impossible for me to go on the *Delphian*. There are lots of useful things I could have done, such as peeling potatoes or making up people's bunks. Even Mr. Bolliver laughed when I said I thought I might have.

Perhaps Mark has this watch below, but I rather hope not because it would be nicer on deck, particularly if you can really see those very bright red and yellow fishes under the water. Ends with some stars showing. Breeze fresher, hauling S. by W.

July 22. Comes in clear and fresh, stiff breeze S. W. Walked with Mr. Bolliver before breakfast to the harbor to see a big schooner come in. She is the *Rosamund Hull* and is just in from Savannah. We would have gone aboard I think, if it had n't been so nearly breakfast time, which was a great pity. Thunder and lightning happened suddenly about noon, and quite a lot of rain, so we stayed in the house and talked. Mr. Bolliver began wondering who ever stole the model of the *Fortune* in the beginning, and why, and the aunts began remembering all sorts of things they never thought of when I asked them. Of course they were quite little when it all happened, but they remember a cross old servant of great-grandfather's, called Elias Rollin, and he had a very long, yellowish sort of face that frightened the little aunts. He used to be a sailor on one of great-grandfather's ships. The aunts think he went away before the *Fortune* went down, because they can't remember him after that. Mr. Bolliver thinks that perhaps he stole the model with an idea that it was very valuable itself, because he 'd heard the saying about the fortunes of the Ingrams and the *Fortune of the Indies*. Probably great-grandfather talked about it quite a lot and the man

thought it was the model that mattered, nobody knowing about the paper of course. If he did steal it—and I think he did—he probably took it away and sold it and was disgusted at not getting much money for it. Mr. Bolliver says that when he saw the model and bought it he never supposed that any of us could be alive because he did n't think Ingrams would be selling their ship—or if they had, it showed they did n't want it anyway. So the whole thing is certainly very queer and much more exciting than any kind of book. Mr. Bolliver says that the boys will no doubt cable IF they really get the treasure, which is one good thing. But I don't think I can wait that long. Ends clearing, much cooler.

July 23. This day begins bright, fair and hot. No wind. Mr. Bolliver went away this afternoon. I wish he could have stayed longer. He is more relieving to talk to than the aunts. Did nothing much. Read old log-books. Went down again and looked at the schooner. Got scolded by the aunts for talking to the men. But they were nice and told me things. Ends same as morning as to wind and weather.

July 25. Comes in cloudy and dark. Wind NNE. Walked out to Bluff Point and got caught in the rain. Was not much scolded by the aunts. How strange, because I was sopping. Instead they gave me hot lemonade and toast and said I could make cinnamon sugar for it if I wanted. So I did, and it was pretty good. Wrote to Mr. Bolliver, which

is next best to talking to him, only his answers don't come very quickly. I wish the Pacific was not so far away, and then Alan could send wireless messages to the station on the hill in town, because he must be able to send messages whenever he wants, I should think. Otherwise what 's the good of being a wireless operator? If they had gone across by the quick, expensive, passenger way, from San Francisco, they'd be nearly there now, I should think. But the *Delphian* will take much longer. And just as long to come back. The rain is coming through my window, which I 'd better shut. Ends still stormy.

July 27. Clearing. Wind hauling NW. Light clouds. Woke before sunrise and stayed awake. Got tired of thinking, so got up and finished "Admirals All." Sophy broke a tea-cup—fortunately not one of the aunts' preciousest ones. Lydia Fisk came to see me which was a bother. She says her hat came from New York, but I think it 's rediculous looking all the same. I 'm awfully afraid I was crossish to her because she did n't stay long, which she usually does, but I felt all sort of blowing up. Aunt Ellen tryed to teach me to hem-stitch, but I 'm afraid I 'll never be very useful at such things. Walked up over the hill and back by Larch Avenue, but it 's rather ugly up there. Began "Admirals All" over again, in evening. Ends clear and many stars. Wind NW by W.

July 28. Comes in hot and hazy. Wind light

and failing W. Tiredish all day. Did n't do anything much. Wrote to the boys but when will they get it? Ends same as began. No wind.

So ran Jane's log, with these and other entries, throughout several weeks. It must be confessed that the log languished presently, as youthful journals often do. Not because Jane had too much else to do, however. On the contrary, she seemed to have less and less to occupy her. Mr. Bolliver, who at first was inclined to treat as a joke her alternate languor and restlessness, scolded her laughingly.

"Upon my soul, you 'll turn into a little old woman if you do nothing but sit glowering at the harbor," he said. "Can you find nothing to do?"

"Oh, I have lots to do," Jane assured him. "I just can't get at it, that 's all. I feel the way you do when you 're expecting somebody to come and they 're late."

"Pooh!" said Mr. Bolliver. "You 'd better get over that without delay, young lady, if it 's the boys you 're waiting for. You 'll waste a deal of time if you put off doing anything until *they* get back!"

And he shook his finger at her merrily, but the look he gave her was shrewd enough.

So the summer days drifted over Resthaven and rolled on to the Pacific, where the *Delphian* was pounding always nearer to her destination.

CHAPTER X

DIVERSIONS OF THE DELPHIAN

NO, the life at Resthaven could not even be enlivened by invented distractions, but aboard the *Delphian* invention was not needed to supply excitement. It was a stifling night when the stars seemed to have scorched holes through the heavy blanket of the sky. An ominous oily silence held the sea; the running riffle that flees before the storm sometimes wrinkled it momentarily and passed. Mark went on watch with those stars still burning his brain. Mechanically he went about his task, thrusting his hand here and there upon the great shining machinery with the precision that he had gained in these weeks. His long-nosed oil-can probed about like an animate thing, feeding the lubrication-cups.

"If anything 's ever going to heat up, now 's its time, if it has human feelings," he thought,

wiping his forehead with the back of a wet, oily hand.

Suddenly he came awake with a snap, mentally as well as physically. He went to his chief in a few bounds.

"Report a hot eccentric-strap, sir," he said. "Will you look at it?"

The engineer on watch went with him swiftly and with no words till he gave his brief orders. The strap was dosed with oil and sulphur, the water-service was put on, and the engine-room force kept watch over it as one might over a sick child. The engines were slowed, and the *Delphian* proceeded carefully through the darkness.

When Mark came on deck the great stars had been smothered by cloud. The ship climbed long rollers whose crests hissed with phosphorescent foam. The Pacific seemed to be belying its name, he thought. He leaned beside the boiler-hatch for a time, thinking drowsily of the hot eccentric-strap, rather priding himself on his quickness in recognizing trouble. Then he wondered why he stood there—there were not even those sullen stars to see. He stumbled to bed and slept instantly.

He woke later—broad awake in a flash—with a wild feeling of disaster; the feeling that snatches instinctively at the heart when a ship's engines stop at sea in the night. For the *Delphian* was rolling to immense waves without steerage way; the thrum of her engines was still. Mark flung himself into his clothes, for only one thought filled him—that somehow this must be his fault; his the blame that the *Delphian* lay helpless, pitching to the seas before a gathering storm. "Disgrace—disgrace—disgrace—" the phantom voice of the still engines rebuked him as he went swiftly down the dirty iron ladders.

The youngest engineer greeted him. In grimy dungaree, with the black look of the mid-watch on his face, he could scarcely have been identified with the banjo-twanging wag of the mess-room.

"Hot eccentric-strap," he explained, as though Mark had never heard of such a thing before. "Slowed the engine—no good. Turned the hose on the blame thing—no good, nasty mess. Ready to seize any minute and knock the valve-gear into a cocked hat. Stopped to see what 's the matter."

The hose had indeed made a nasty mess. Men were stripping the gear. The engine-room showed a sort of orderly confusion. Mark sighed thankfully that it was the natural perversity of the strap, and no carelessness of his, that had caused the trouble. But there was a cause: one of the pins holding the brass liner to the strap had worked out.

"Well, you can't blame her getting hot over a thing like that," muttered the youngest engineer. "I lost a pin myself, one time—a diamond one, I 'll say—and I was hot enough over it."

The chief scowled bitterly in the direction of the youngest engineer, who went to work with a snap.

So the *Delphian,* presently reassured by the steady drum of her engine, swung on again.

"Fixed up ahead of the storm, anyway," Mark reflected, on deck again, peering against the wind. "But she 's coming, all right."

He wondered, yawningly, if it was worth while to go to bed for the third time that night. Something impelled him to keep awake—a tingling sense of adventure incomplete haunted him.

But he was no less surprised when the engine stopped again, with an air of finality this time. He tumbled down the engine-room companionway. It was the youngest engineer who again gave him the information he wanted.

"I. P. valve-stem 's busted," he remarked. "Just plain busted, for no reason at all. This is our busy night. The Chief 's mad as thunder."

"What 's he going to do?" Mark inquired, aghast.

"Take out the I. P. valve and run on the H. P. and L. P. engines, I reckon," said the youngest engineer. "That 's a rotton combination. We 'll be doing the toddle, my boy. We can't get doctored up till Honolulu, either. Gosh, what a funeral procession we 'll be! Wonder what the skipper 's doing all this time?"

The skipper was busy. Talking now to the engine-room through the tube, now to the deck-officer beside him, he stood on the bridge watching his ship take sea after sea. It had been necessary to stop the engines so suddenly that she was not hove to, and she kept falling off broadside and rolling in the trough of vast

seas that flung themselves upon her out of the dark. But the captain knew his vessel. He let her alone, and, struggling and lifting, she gradually found her own bearings and hove herself to.

Alan sat at his post, ready to fling a swift S. O. S. into the storm if he should hear the order; meanwhile watching the gaunt seas catch and worry the ship, showing sharp fangs of white water about her. Mark, deep in the engine-room never knew quite how wild a night it was; Alan, shut off from the activity of the rest of the ship, seemed alone with the storm. Suddenly, as never before, he felt the stir of the Ingram sea-blood. His grandfather, his great-grandfather, had weathered worse gales than this in ships the *Delphian* could stow in her cargo-hold. They had mastered great winds with matchless seamanship, challenged them with split canvas, and driven through ice-bound Antarctic seas under bare poles. All at once the *Delphian* seemed a poor thing, cringing helpless, with nothing to aid her, now that her engine was still. Alan suddenly understood some of Jane's proud disdain for steam and felt a kindling flash of sym-

pathy for her dreams. He cried out aloud, incoherently, for wilder adventure, and the chief wireless man, who knew it to be his first voyage, said:

"Steady, lad! We 're not at all done for."

Alan glared at him pityingly, but said nothing, for he did not, himself, understand his curious sense of exaltation.

At last the engine-room bell tinkled hopefully, there was a shudder and swirl as the screw turned slowly over, and the crippled engine took up its heavier work. Little by little the *Delphian* swung, till wind and sea were a few points on her bow and she lifted confidently, reassured. Her engines were going just enough to give her steerage way, and so she crawled through the night, now paling to morning, without trying to do more than keep out of harm's way.

Day broke over a sea still vastly shaken by the storm, but growing gradually more calm under a brightening sky. The piling rollers stretched over a limitless waste—astern, ahead, abeam—a huge, silent, swinging sea, with the *Delphian* all alone in the middle of it. She had settled to her work now, making the

best of it, as she plodded along grimly toward Honolulu.

Mark and Alan met in the first dog-watch to discuss the perils of the night and their share in them. If Alan remembered his wild mood in the wireless-room, he kept silence concerning it, for Mark would have scoffed. They leaned idly at the rail, talking now of the engine trouble, now of the eternal topic of their plans on reaching China.

A shadow fell across Mark's shoulder, and they turned to see Chun Lon, in his white duck coat and Chinese shoes, shuffling silently along the deck. He approached them with an ingratiating smile and folded his thin yellow hands demurely before him.

"You like nice cup of tea?" he inquired.

"No, thanks," Mark retorted briefly.

"Pletty ti'ed," Chun Lon continued. "Ship no sleep last night. I make you one nice tiny cup of tea velly soon."

"We don't want any tea, I tell you," Mark said, turning around.

Chun Lon sighed and dropped to a squatting attitude near the boys.

"I like make you tea," he proceeded. "I like be fliends with you, because you go Shanghai-side. I Shanghai man," he added, with some pride.

He inched himself a little nearer, sitting on his heels.

"I tell you what," he said. "I know all evlyt'ing Shanghai—tiny little piecee boy I know Shanghai—always. You want to know all evlyt'ing Shanghai, you ask Chun Lon, yes?"

"Very kind of you," said Alan, "but we have friends who 'll tell us what we want to know."

"Ah, fliends!" Chun Lon cried, shuffling closer. "*I* say fliends! I say Chineeman you' fliend. Listen! You got maybe Chinee talk in paper no understand? Melican fliend no can tell you what. I velly clev'—can do. Can make all Chinee talk Melican talk, see, yes?"

"What makes you think we have Chinese papers?" Mark asked sharply, wheeling upon him.

Chun Lon merely blinked his narrow eyes slowly.

"Maybe not," he said amiably. "You make

pidgin—you make business Shanghai-side, so you maybe have Chinee paper—maybe not. Now I go make nice cup of tea."

"Confound him and his tea!" Mark growled, watching Chun Lon's sliding gait as he departed. "What do you suppose that little play was about?"

"Do you think he was really trying to be friendly?" Alan asked, dubiously.

"I do not," Mark replied. "Not he. I don't like the cut of his jib. But I don't see what he can do to us, exactly. I think he 's on the wrong track."

However, Mark diligently inspected his locker that evening and assured himself that the papers in his wallet were undisturbed.

"He 's a good little guesser, that 's all," Mark decided, as he turned in.

CHAPTER XI

"COME . . . TO CHINA!"

LONG before the *Delphian* reached Shanghai, long before there arrived in Resthaven the slow letter telling of her delay at Honolulu, Mr. Bolliver had formulated in his uneasy mind a plan of action which he contemplated now dubiously, now confidently. He had not been entirely at rest since the boys had sailed from New York that drizzling June day. Times were very different now, after all, he reflected. Boys in their teens were not the men that lads of the last century had been. He began to feel that he had laid upon his own shoulders a burden of responsibility that the passage of weeks did not serve to lighten. But it was Jane, in large measure, who really tipped the scales in favor of his new and somewhat daring plan. For Jane, to the eyes of her anxious friends and rela-

tives, was not at all as they liked to see her. She troubled Mr. Bolliver exceedingly, for at first he could not really believe what he was observing.

It was just after luncheon—Mr. Bolliver was spending the week-end at Ingram Mansion—and he and Jane were alone in the garden. His mind was at last made up, definitely. He fingered his seal watch-fob—the one with the flying-fish on it—and looked at her several times. Then he said suddenly, in a much gruffer voice than he had intended:

"Jane, you didn't eat any lunch."

Jane started, and looked at him, and almost at once looked away again.

"I wasn't hungry."

"But you ate almost no breakfast."

"I wasn't hungry then, either."

"Why not?"

Jane pulled a leaf sharply from a bending shrub beside them and picked it into shreds.

"I suppose I'm too much bothered," she admitted.

"Come here," he said.

She came, and he put one hand on her shoulder and with the other turned her face up

to his. She met his eyes then, squarely, with a long unfaltering look. But her eyes reminded him, he thought, of nothing so much as the dangerous blue calm before a devastating wind-flaw lashes the sea. There was something strained about her mouth, too, that troubled him.

"You know that I know what 's the matter with you," he said. "I 'm worried about them, too, and you have even more cause to worry, because they 're your brothers—and because the other Mark Ingrams come and bother you. And probably the old *Fortune of the Indies* goes sailing around in your poor head every night."

Jane laughed, rather, and turned away.

"I 'll be good," she said, "I won't think about it any more."

But she whirled suddenly upon him, with the Ingram blue flashing fiercely in her eyes.

"How can I help thinking about it? How can I keep waiting and *waiting,* and not knowing?" she asked swiftly. "How can I go on fiddling around and knitting stuff to please the aunts—and not even any school—when—when—"

She was suddenly silent, twisting the leaf still in her hands. He would rather have had her cry, Mr. Bolliver thought, for her face frightened him. He looked once around the quiet garden, the seaport garden, where gulls flew above the elms and harbor fog was beginning to dim the farthest lilac bushes.

"We are both going to China," he said quietly; "you and I, at once. Er—it 's high time I went to look after my own business," he added in an apologetic sort of way, half to himself.

But Jane did not hear that explanation. She was crying at last, standing very straight and still, with one hand across her face. Mr. Bolliver did not know just what to do. But in a moment he muttered:

"I don't care a snap if she is a proud Ingram, the poor little witch!" And he drew her within his arm.

The fog crept nearer, and with it came the sound of bells. The sea-drift slowly whitened the garden and the elm-tops grew fainter and were lost. Still Jane stood with her hand across her eyes and her forehead bowed upon Mr. Bolliver's sleeve, until he said:

"Come—come, now—to China, my dear."

Mr. Bolliver's medicine certainly seemed to take speedy effect. The aunts stared to see the color in their grandniece's cheeks and to hear the gay excitement in her voice. But when she had gone to bed they conferred together and prepared to deal very solemnly with Mr. Bart Bolliver. They sat down side by side on the davenport and confronted him in a manner most frightening.

"She 'll die if you take her off to China," they said in unison.

"She 'll die if I don't—that 's certain," said Mr. Bolliver, who was standing in front of the fire-place, beneath the ship model.

And his remark was voiced in tones so firm and so final that the aunts found their other arguments upside down, and leaned back rather helplessly to gaze at this dreadfully decided little gentleman and to shake their heads gently.

There was to be no merchant ship about this expedition, you may believe. No indeed! It was to be a swift and purposeful affair of gilt-edged express-train and Pacific liner. Mr. Bolliver was deep in reservations and Toyo

Kisen Kaisha passage in no time, and Jane flew like a joyous wraith from her open trunk to the drawing-room, in order to confide various sudden rapturous fancies to the *Fortune of the Indies.*

The aunts were beyond worry now. They could not collect their wits. They stood, one at each end of Jane's trunk, and let her put into it just about what she pleased, almost without seeing. They supposed that before long they would awaken from this strange and somewhat frightening dream.

But when they did awaken, Jane was gone, and so was Mr. Bolliver. Expressmen had come; people had driven off in a cab. Miss Lucia, long after, actually hurried to the door and flung it wide. But Chesley Street was empty and quite dark, for night had come and a swift train was already speeding west.

"Ellen," Miss Lucia faltered, holding to the door-knob, "Jane 's gone—gone to China. She can't go; we must n't let her."

But there was not even a light on Chesley Street. The little old ladies suddenly held out their arms to one another and stood there, trembling, in the open door of the Ingram mansion.

CHAPTER XII

THE BLACK JOSS

BUT before the *Kyoto Maru* had well begun her voyage across the Pacific, the *Delphian* was nearly at the end of hers. Around her the blue water had changed by degrees to a muddy, brownish waste, and the first gleam of China showed one long yellow strip on the horizon. Mark and Alan, standing eagerly at the rail, were vaguely disappointed. The land, even when the ship had plowed miles closer to it, seemed dreary and uninteresting, with stretching marsh and dull trees. Far stranger and more foreign to them were the countless boats which the *Delphian* now began to pass—ungainly fishing-vessels, brown-sailed salt-junks from up-river, and little, flitting sampans. The lightship that marks the mouth of the Yangtze was long past, and presently Woosung, where the *Delphian* was to dock, loomed

up on the bank of Shanghai's river. It was a clamorous, modern rail-terminal, with big white buildings, and the stamp of the West strong upon it. Here the *Delphian* came to rest, with her great engine still at last, only sizzling sleepily to herself at intervals. The boys said a regretful farewell to her. If their business was finished in time, they hoped to return with her, but just now the thought of returning seemed far ahead.

Feeling very strange in their shore-clothes, they took the river-boat for Shanghai, more excited than they had been at all so far. In the twelve miles the Whangpoo narrowed gradually; more and more houses and thatch-roofed farms showed on the shores; then Western factories and mills lined the water-front, and the narrow channel became almost impassable with craft of every sort. Each vessel that possessed a whistle was blowing it, and the air was filled with the shriek of sirens, the shouts of irate steamer-captains, and the yells of the native boatmen.

But the Ingrams were in Shanghai at last. The earth felt strangely solid and steady; their feet seemed light and insignificant. They wan-

dered aimlessly up from the wharves and stood, rather lost, on the borders of Hongkew, the American settlement.

"We ought to go to Mr. Bolliver's people, first of all," Mark declared, but the way down these streets was so beset with interest that their walk lasted some hours longer than it should have.

For the streets blazed with vertical red and gold and black signs, the façades of shops were carved and polished and ornamented with stucco of gorgeous design, and flags and lanterns floated from the curving eaves. Below clattered the great motley crowd—hurrying rickshaw coolies, creaking wheelbarrows, modern motors, Chinese in native and foreign dress, American ladies with parasols, French sailors with their red pompons, and here and there a stern, red-turbaned Sikh policeman sitting his horse silently.

At last the boys turned into the wide white stretch of Broadway Road, under the green exotic trees. They passed the stately banks and clubs and steamship-buildings, with their solid Anglo-Oriental architecture, and finally came upon Mr. Bolliver's firm, lodged in the

same drowsy building that had sheltered it when the tea trade was young. They were expected, it seemed; news of the *Delphian's* docking had reached these keen, kindly gentlemen who welcomed them. In the dim office, hung with pictures of ships, Mark was motioned to a teakwood chair, and plans were discussed.

"Unless I 'm mistaken," Mr. Tyler told him, "we have located the T'ang Min descendants in the suburbs of Nangpoo. It 's all extraordinary enough, is n't it, young man? But now that you 're here, it ought to be fairly plain sailing. Unless we reckon without the T'ang Min people. However, they 're merchants of some distinction, and, also, Chinese gratitude is just as long-lived as Chinese hatred. Have you your papers, Mr. Mark?"

Yes, indeed, Mark had them. He produced the precious wallet and began unfolding its contents. There was the unneeded letter of introduction to Tyler, Bolliver & Tyler, Inc., and the translation of the original document, and the drafts on the Hong Kong & Shanghai Bank, and—! Mark searched the wallet and searched again. A hideous empty feeling be-

gan rushing over him. His fingers fumbled coldly at the flaps; he even plunged his hands wildly into all his pockets. Then, pushing his hair off his wet forehead, he said blankly:

"It 's gone! The paper—the original one—the important one—is *gone!*"

Mr. Tyler looked very grave.

"My boy, that 's extremely serious. "Without the two signatures, I 'm afraid your journey is in vain. Are you sure?"

But Mark was thinking, and thinking hard. He crashed his fist down on the polished table, and the porcelain ink-well leaped.

"Chun Lon!" he cried.

Grasping the table, he poured out an explanation which became clearer to himself at every word, as corroborative incidents came back to him. How the Chinaman had often sidled past him and Alan as they stood talking earnestly, off watch, of their plans; how he had sometimes come across the man scuttling through the bulkhead door near his stateroom. He now remembered clearly the conversation after the storm, when Chun Lon had thrust the offer of cups of tea and his services as compradore upon the boys.

"But what could he want with the paper?" Alan muttered. "How could *he* use it?"

"You may believe that he has some complicated scheme," Mr. Tyler said, tapping his pen on the table. "It may not be practicable, however. Chinese of his class are a strange mixture of shrewdness and child-like ignorance. But that does not alter the fact that the document is gone. How unfortunate!"

Mark thought that "unfortunate" was putting it very mildly. The stifling watches on the *Delphian,* the long, long sea-miles that lay behind, the fortunes of the Ingrams within reach—and now, the only claim to them gone forever! He must have spoken the last words aloud, for Mr. Tyler said:

"We 'll hope not forever. Even Chinamen can be caught. The municipal police will be keen on the trail, if trail there be, before sunset. I 'll get in touch with the *Delphian* at once."

There was nothing to be done. Mark and Alan went gloomily to their hotel, where the good Tyler had reserved their room. Shanghai did not lure them; they sat long over an almost untasted supper.

"I can't stand sitting around," Mark said at last. "I 'm going out to walk in that park place. It 's beastly hot."

"I 'm going to write to Jane," Alan said.

Mark leaned across the table.

"If you tell her a word of this," he whispered, "I 'll—I 'll throttle you, Alan."

"Just what do you take me for?" Alan said quickly, with a sudden blaze in his eyes.

"Beg your pardon, old man." Mark sighed, getting up. "It 's all such rough luck. Good-by."

Alan went slowly to their room and Mark strode away. Dusk was just beginning to settle over the river. On the Bund lights appeared. The little paper lanterns of rickshaws bobbed and flitted everywhere. Mark turned and walked aimlessly toward the Soochow bridge.

There was a padding of feet behind him, and a tolerably neat Chinese in a faded blue coat and linen trousers appeared at his side.

"Me come velly click hotel-side," this person announced. "Melican man no go Shanghai all alone night-time. No see Shanghai here; here all Melican Blitish man. No see Shanghai till

see Chinee city. Me velly hon'able plecious guide." He here flashed some sort of official-looking button from inside his coat.

All this had been shot off with such speed that Mark had not been able to answer a word. Now he said:

"I have n't time to go sightseeing to-night. Go away—pronto—get out, savvy?"

His self-appointed guide paid no attention to this, however, and skipped before him, offering attractions.

"Velly click walkee," said he, in his abominable pidgin English. "Catchem tiny little piecee Chinee-town. See velly famous tea-house all same Willow Plate—velly nice—moonlight. Velly famous guide he want only twenty cent one hour. Can catchem?"

"Oh, pshaw!" thought Mark, looking around at the quiet, eminently civilized streets of the American quarter; "it might be any city at home. I don't believe it 's as risky as they say. I 'd like to see the old Willow Pattern tea-house; I daresay I 'd be back in no time. I can't stand just walking around and thinking. All right, boy," he said aloud; "can do."

The Chinese bowed and grinned delightedly,

and led the way rapidly through the outlying streets of Hongkew and on to the dirty Chinese bund, where the boat-coolies in their vile floating homes were beginning to crawl under the bamboo roofs of their boats. Here and there the glow of an opium lamp leaked out from the woven matting and showed where some poor wretch was finding short solace in the terrible drug. Mark's guide hurried along just ahead of him, and plunged suddenly through a gate in a high wall into a wholly native street paved with filthy stone flagging. There was a fearful and indescribable smell and a tumult of noise. Gloomy walls shut off the gray courts behind them from the street. The tortuous ways were filled with hurrying Chinese—vendors of all kinds of wares, men selling savory roast ducks besmeared with sesame oil; itinerant restaurants with little glowing braziers and rows of tiny cakes cooking in shallow pans; throngs of people with no apparent business but to move incessantly on and on. There were lanterns everywhere, and strange, dim, red lights burning smokily at the eaves of joss-houses, and glimpses through half-opened

doors of old yellow crones mumbling tea and old men smoking water-pipes and talking in a low sing-song.

Mark had wholly altered his opinion as to Shanghai's likeness to an American city. He was interested, but slightly apprehensive, and he kept his wits sharply about him. He decided, however, that it was better to follow his guide than to slip away and try to reach Hongkew alone through this meaningless tangle of alleys, so he trudged on. They passed houses of slate-colored brick, and strange shops where ivory and jade and amber and brass and black-wood were displayed, and other shops where unsavory strings of wizened edibles hung from the doorways, and still others with curious canisters and jars of medicine—herbs and roots and nauseous bones and Chinese drugs. Then presently, sure enough, there opened at the end of a street a dark pond lit by uncertain moonlight, and there could be discerned the shadowy angles of a zigzag bridge and the upward-curving eaves of the Willow Pattern Tea-house.

"Velly famous, plecious, nice tea-house,"

Mark's guide explained. "Melican man not often catchem piecee moonlight on him." With which remark he whisked off again.

It was dark here and unwholesome. The houses were unlighted and there seemed to be a sinister murmuring, instead of the shrill, unconcerned babel of the crowd through which they had passed earlier. Mark looked back with a slight shiver to the moonlight on the pond, and then went on, to find his guide smiling beside an open dark doorway.

"Velly nice temple," the man explained, softly. "You see Chinee-man say he players velly click. You mebbe catchem one little incense for joss, all same Chinee-man."

Mark mistrusted the temple. He stepped back carelessly.

"No time," he said. "Must go hotel-side again. Come again some other time."

With a swift look around at the almost deserted streets where only a few Chinese grinned impassively at the "foreign devil," the guide seized Mark suddenly and thrust him within the place. The door clanged to with a substantial crash, and Mark felt other hands grasp him.

"You see Chinee-man in temple—velly intlesting," whispered the guide.

Mark knew now that it was no use to struggle. He knew, also, what an insane thing he had done in following the man at all. But there, on the quiet American bund, it had seemed so safe and all like a make-believe place. He was wide awake now, and, in the midst of his anxiety, very hopeful, for he felt sure he knew the reason for his seizure and that he would find Chun Lon before the Sikhs did.

Dimly through smoke-hung gloom Mark could see a number of ugly gods faintly illumined by the smoldering fire of incense-sticks and the waning flicker of a few guttering red wax candles. But he was pushed and pulled without delay into a stifling room where a group of Chinese sat crouched around a lard-oil lamp all smoking violently with much rapping of pipes and crooning speech. They looked around as Mark was pushed to the doorway between the guide and another man. Facing him, with his hands outspread over a paper, Mark saw Chun Lon, who smiled slowly and quite cor-

dially. Mark started to say, "You villain!" and thought better of it. He merely looked at Chun Lon instead.

"How do," said the Chinese briskly. "You come make little business, yes? Can do? See, you write here—just little tiny two word—just your name, yes? Then we say, 'Good-by!' "

"What 's the paper about?" Mark demanded. Beneath the sheet of Chinese characters Chun Lon held he saw the edge of the precious document signed by T'ang Min and Captain Ingram.

"Oh, nice talk," Chun Lon explained. "He say Chun Lon one velly good mess-boy, get-tem 'nother ship, yes?"

"You scoundrel," Mark exclaimed, "it 's nothing of the kind! You could have given me such a paper on the ship, and it 's the captain you 'd have asked for a recommendation."

Chun Lon looked childlike and uncomprehending.

"You no write tiny little word, see, we make you go find ancestor. Velly sad; velly, velly too bad."

He drew his thumb slowly down the edge of a long curved knife which glittered suddenly

out of his sleeve. He continued to smile blandly. Mark looked around at the circle of impassive faces and narrow black eyes, all fixed on him. An old man dropped two expressionless monosyllables into the silence, and Mark fancied he caught the glint of other knives behind the sickening smoke of the bubble-pipes.

Swift thoughts raced through his mind. He knew quite well by now that, even though he might sign the paper, he would never go free from the temple if Chun Lon could prevent it. For with Mark free, the document was of no more use to the Chinaman than if it were not signed at all. With the keen awareness of every detail of the moment, Mark wondered why Chun Lon could not have forged the signature and had done with it; then he realized that the man in all likelihood had never wielded anything but a wooden pen and probably could have scrawled nothing that would have resembled Western handwriting. An ignorant man, Mark thought, staring at Chun Lon's sallow face above the lamp. In his white mess-coat, on ship-board, he had at least looked clean and servile; now, happed up in untidy native dress, he seemed little better than a coolie, with the

curious mingling of craft and stupidity carved in his flat, olive features.

Mark made up his mind suddenly and desperately to an old and obvious trick. With a glance at the position of the door, he flung his hat swiftly over the little flickering lamp and snatched the papers out of the darkness. He heard a whine of steel that cut the air close to his ear, and felt a soft body that went down before him as he charged madly for the door. In the temple-room there was utter stillness till the low frenzy of sing-song voices and the pad of footsteps woke behind him. He looked around quickly and darted, for the moment, into the solid darkness behind the largest image, and there crouched, listening.

His hands sought out the squat shape of the big joss and slipped suddenly into an opening beneath it. It was of hollow bronze; he crawled cautiously inside it and stood upright. Once, perhaps, jewels had been set in the eye-sockets of the god, but time had long since taken them, and Mark could peer out into the smoky darkness of the temple through the empty eyeholes. He could not see the crouching forms that searched the temple, but he could

hear the shuffling of feet on the stone floor and the rustle of their passing. He knew that they were seeking and seeking in the darkness, with their knives ready. One of them opened the door to the street-passage, and a film of moonlight spread a little way into the place. The Chinaman stood looking up the passage-way, and then slipped out of the moonlight again, leaving the door open.

Mark 's hand, in his pocket, encountered something which gave him a rather wild idea. It was a risky idea, and he hesitated and pondered over it for some time. Then he decided to try it. He took from his pocket a small electric flashlight—an ingenious patent contrivance which he had bought in New York, that showed a white, green, or red light accordingly as a different colored glass in a metal slide was pushed over the bulb. He held it up on a level with the eye-holes of his friendly, protecting idol, and, with sudden resolution, pressed the contact button. There was total silence in the temple, then a tremulous babble of excitement and short yelps of what certainly sounded like fear to the anxious Mark. It is not comfortable for a super-

stitious Chinaman, a devout believer in evil spirits and magic power, to see the eyes of a bronze war-god suddenly blaze with green fire.

No amount of Western veneer can wholly cover in the low-caste Chinese his belief in evil power and his innate fear of it. Chun Lon was the only one among these men who had ever mingled much with foreigners, and his knowledge of Western ways was confined, at best, to shipboard doings and wharf-head brawling. His time ashore had been spent in strange holes of the Chinatown of New York or San Francisco. The customs of "foreign devils" he despised; of their electric flashlights he knew nothing. The temple was ancient, the joss immemorial and sacred; whatever manifestations it might choose to exhibit were supernatural and certainly not to be connected for an instant with the possible presence within the temple-room of a frightened young American.

A few brave Chinese crawled a little nearer, but as they gazed, panic-stricken, the eyes of the angry god glared at them with a baleful red beam that sent them shrieking and tum-

bling to the passage. Mark, grown reckless, flashed the light green, white, and red in quick succession, and with a last squeal of terror the Chinese pushed each other pell-mell up the passage, the gray-robed temple-priest fleeing last, in abject fear of his wrathy deity.

They were really gone! Mark waited, motionless, but none returned. The moon set, and the doorway grew dark. The candles had long ago burned to the end, and the ash of the incense-sticks had toppled in gray, powdery heaps before the black feet of the idols. Mark crept stiffly from his hiding-place.

"Thanks, old boy," he whispered inaudibly to the grinning joss, and then tiptoed to the passage and slipped out. The streets were in total darkness. Cocks were crowing eerily somewhere. Mark ran silently and swiftly, with no sense of direction and no idea except to put as many miles and corners as possible between himself and the temple. Sometimes he paused a moment to listen, and once he heard, above the other night-sounds, the squeak of a yulow, or steering-oar, on a river-boat.

He blundered toward it, down an evil little

alley, and found himself, with the sky just graying into morning, on the edge of a scummy waterway where sampans were moored and their inhabitants beginning to wake and peer out. He got his bearings from the spreading eastern light, decided which must be downstream, and began walking doggedly along the slippery and devious runways that followed the course of the creek. He was extremely dirty by now, hatless and pallid, and he did not attract so much attention or suspicion as a neatly clad foreigner.

There were signs now that the creek was widening; then the Chinese city wall loomed across the yellow sky, and Mark followed it till he found a carved, crumbling gate. Once through this, he knew that walking straight on toward the sun would bring him to the settlements. And at last he found himself, surprisingly, on Nanking Road, and then the British bund opened majestically before him, with the Public Garden, all roses and chrysanthemums and tall swaying trees. A little municipal street-sweeper, in his red jacket and blue trousers, was busily clearing the road with his reed broom, and he stared in surprise at Mark. No

rickshaws were to be seen in the quiet, dawn-lit streets, so Mark set off resolutely toward the Soochow bridge and presently stood outside his hotel. He stood there rather giddily, wondering whether it really was his hotel and whether he had dreamed all this wild thing on a bench in the park. But—he had no hat and the precious paper was in his breast-pocket.

He sat down on the step and put his head in his hands.

"I wonder if Jane will believe this," he thought, disjointedly.

At that moment he heard quick footsteps, and Alan's arm was around his shoulders. Mr. Tyler stood beside him.

"Thank Heaven!" said Mr. Tyler. "The municipal police are looking for *you*, too, and this boy 's been nearly off his head."

"I have the paper," Mark said, with an uncertain grin. "That is, I think I have, unless I dreamed the whole business."

He felt in his pocket and pulled out both the papers. Mr. Tyler stared. Mark looked across to the bund, where people were beginning to move about. He passed a hand over his dirty face.

"For mercy's sake let 's get in somewhere where we can talk," he suggested.

So, with Mr. Tyler and Alan still gazing at him curiously, they all went into the hotel.

Mr. Tyler's compradore translated Chun Lon's paper for them, after breakfast. It was much what Mark had imagined it might be—a document stating that the bearer, Chun Lon, was sent by Mark Ingram, authorized by Tyler, Bolliver & Tyler and perfectly to be trusted, and that he was to be paid the sum mentioned in the accompanying document.

"He could n't have carried out such a scheme," Mr. Tyler commented, "but it was boldly executed, in his ignorance. Mr. Mark, your great-grandfather, would n't be ashamed of you. Now I propose a day of loafing about —or perhaps you 'd like to see the Willow Pattern Tea-house in the walled city?" he asked, with a dry twinkle of amusement. "And," he added, "if you 've no objection, I think I 'll put this paper in our safe until your expedition is ready to start for Nangpoo."

CHAPTER XIII

THE FORTUNES OF THE INGRAMS

"DO you like it as much as going on the *Gloria?*" Jane asked abruptly, coming back to Mr. Bolliver's steamer-chair from a ramble around the deck of the *Kyoto Maru.*

"Eh? The *Gloria?*" murmured Mr. Bolliver, who had been napping.

"All the shininess, and the band, and everything," Jane pursued, rather vaguely.

Mr. Bolliver rubbed his wits awake and perceived what she was driving at.

"We-e-ll," he said, "I must confess that I 'm older by fifty-two years and three months than I was when I sailed on the *Gloria.* Some aspects of the *Kyoto Maru* do appeal to this ancient man."

Jane flung at him a swift look of reproach, on two scores.

"It 's merely my body," he excused himself,

"which shamefully approves of the shininess and the hot water and the electric-lights and the telephones and all. In spirit—yes, I would rather have the *Gloria.*"

"It 's the same sea, is n't it?" Jane mused.

"Yes, the same," Mr. Bolliver agreed. "The waves were bigger for the *Gloria,* but no bluer."

"But China 'll be different."

"Yes, China will be different—yet it's always the same underneath, just below the Western skin that stretches in tight little patches here and there across the surface. But it will be changed again since I was out last, thirteen years ago. This republic—young China feeling her way."

He was talking more to himself than to Jane, watching the dipping funnels of the *Kyoto Maru* against the pale sky. He roused himself and sat up straight in his deck-chair.

"Well, we 're making good time—good time, Jane," he said. "But who cares, nowadays, how soon or late we reach the other side of the world?" he added. "We 're not record breaking." He seemed to be following his own thought, sometimes in silence; his words were spoken in little detached groups.

"Think of it! Why, I can remember, though I was in petticoats, the bets that were made—and the cheers, and the bunting—and the bulletins posted up at the custom-house."

Jane was not sure of the whole meaning of this somewhat vague outburst, but Mr. Bolliver did not leave her long in doubt. He swept all at once into clear, consecutive reminiscence.

"I can remember it myself—the *Sea Bride* and the *Yankee Flyer* dropping anchor in Boston Harbor not over an hour apart—in from Hong-Kong in ninety-two days! Egad! They'd raced every inch of the way, never seeing each other from the hour they left till the moment they reached home, every scrap of canvas cracked on and never furled. Ninety-two days! Round the Horn that meant, mind you! Why, it 's not so much longer than our friend the *Delphian* takes, with her steam and her Canal. The whole continent rang with such stories then. Yes, Jane, I remember my uncle holding me up above the crowd to see those two young skippers come up from India Wharf. Why, women were pelting 'em with flowers! Bah! Look at our dirty smoke trailing up across the decent sky!"

So concluded Mr. Bolliver wrathily, settling himself again in his chair with an air of finality. Jane twinkled with sober delight.

"But I thought you liked the electric-fans and the hot water," she reminded him.

"Bah!" said Mr. Bolliver again, and opened his book ostentatiously.

So Jane went off to trudge around the deck once more. She declined various invitations to join in games of shuffle-board and quoits, and went over to the less popular windward side, where she could be blown to bits undisturbed and could fancy the *Fortune of the Indies* racing to Hong-Kong in ninety-two days. But the *Kyoto Maru* was doing her best for the imperious Jane, and every revolution of the screw brought her that much nearer to the summoning shores of China.

At about that time, while Jane stood gazing into the wind on board the swift and unfaltering liner, Mark and Alan were setting out from Shanghai to take the steamer for Nangpoo. Needless to say, they were wholly unaware that their sister was looking to windward in their

direction, separated from them only by a matter of a few thousand miles of salt water.

"Now," Mark said, "comes the real adventure. Wish Jane was along. Would n't she be keen on it? Poor little kid, kicking her heels in Resthaven!"

So spoke Mark, on the deck of the Nangpoo boat. He had no idea how truly he spoke when he said that now came the real adventure.

The estate of the descendants of T'ang Min lay on the outskirts of Nangpoo, beyond the walled city, in the midst of an ancient and beautiful garden. From the climbing terraces mulberry-trees drooped and shimmered; pomegranates flashed globes of smoldering crimson; chrysanthemums swayed in drowsy masses. In water-worn marble pools blue lotus swung on dark water. Beyond the paved courtyard the mansion itself slept among tall, wide-spreading trees. It was all very ancient and very still. Small, worn steps led upward among dark, twisted cedars; carved sandstone bridges spanned tiny polished waterways that a stride might cross. The servant who had

opened the tall gates led the way swiftly and without sound to the courtyard of the house. Mark and Alan held their breath as they crossed the shallow stone steps and entered the wide, bare hall.

The young Chinese student whom Mr. Tyler had sent with them as guide and interpreter gave them rapid and nervous instructions while they waited, stiffly, on the low, black, carved chairs. Mark scarcely heard these elaborate rules of etiquette. He was wondering if it had been here, in this dim, gilded mansion, that his great-grandfather had sat beside the couch of T'ang Min to sign the document; wondering if perhaps they all were dreaming, and if, after all, he could be sitting in his own old Windsor chair in his room at Resthaven. Resthaven! No, a dream could not be so real that Resthaven could seem so infinitely far away.

From an inner court came a gleam of sunshine, a sheen of leaves, the drone of falling fountain-water, the croon and whisper of pigeons. This must have been the same always, nor would it ever change. This civilization moved in the slow cycles of a thousand

years. Great-grandfather Mark, stepping here seventy years before, could have found it in nowise different—yet how remote, in America, seemed 1847! The vast machinery of China is geared to a slower plan.

But now came the master of this house, Huen, grandson of T'ang Min—tall, courteous, inscrutable, clad all in cumquat-colored silk. He bowed very politely and shook hands cordially, Chinese fashion, with himself, while Mark and Alan—feeling quite silly and rather embarrassed—did the same. The interpreter, in the background, began droning a long speech. Mark felt all at once that it was a wildly impossible thing—this demanding two hundred thousand taels from an unknown and unsuspecting gentleman, and that the whole expedition was very like to be a wild goose chase. But Mr. Huen had now produced a large pair of spectacles and was busily reading the paper which Mark had mechanically given him. When he finished he smiled, and looked very keenly and kindly at the boys over the spectacles.

"He says," interpreted the student hastily, "that you are very honorably invite to partake of his humble meal, and the hospitality of his

miserable abode is yours. He bows to you. He wishes you joy and long life."

"That 's kind of him," murmured Alan.

There was no clue to whether or not this gentleman had the faintest notion of the transaction between his grandfather and Captain Ingram. He was admirably self-contained, and his guests strove to model their own behavior on his Oriental dignity and calm.

The humble meal came somewhat later, after a walk through the hushed reaches of the musk-scented garden, and was such as to leave the boys tranfixed with astonishment. They had never imagined it was possible, in times less remote than those of Babylonian feasts, to eat—or try to eat—so many kinds of things at once.

There was sliced chicken and duck, tiny meat-pies in molds, rolled-up slices of ham, whole roast pigeons crouched on their own cooked eggs, persimmon tarts, shark-fin soup, small saucers of fish, and strange unknown vegetables; and then there was veal, and cucumbers, and duck-skin, browned, and some more rather queer soup—quite out of place after all the other things—and unappetizing looking pickled eggs, very delicious when courageously eaten,

and shrimps, and bean-cakes filled with almonds, and pear-shaped muskmelons, and bamboo sprouts, and last of all a wonderful and symbolic pudding filled with mysterious things and tasting most delectably. All this was accompanied by countless tiny cups of hot weak wine and delicate jasmine tea, and enlivened by the stately converse of Mr. Huen. Though his remarks were delivered to them in a halting, second-hand fashion by the student, the boys soon perceived that Mr. Huen was a well-informed and very delightful gentleman.

It was not until after the last shelled almond had been eaten and the guests had dipped their hands in silver bowls of petal-filled water and wiped their faces on hot perfumed towels that he spoke of the business in hand. While they listened, half incredulous, wholly spellbound, he told them that his father and his father's father had laid a sacred trust upon the sons of the house. There waited behind a sealed lacquer door a box, sealed, too, by the hand of T'ang Min. It would have waited, apparently, for another century, if a Mark Ingram had not come to claim it.

Mr. Huen rose and led the way from the

feast-room, with a hushed murmur of silken garments across the polished floor. He indicated that Mark and Alan were to follow him to a small room rich with dim, tarnished, golden filigree. He set aside a tall screen on which a broidered dragon writhed, and revealed, set into the wall, a little red lacquer door.

"It is a place for precious things," he explained.

Then he beckoned Mark to his side and pointed to the old unbroken seal.

"You are Mark Ingram," he said. "Open it."

The sound of his own name in the middle of the Chinese phrase made Mark start violently. He was almost in a dream. Alan, close behind him, was breathing hard.

So Mark bent and took his knife and broke the seals, and the door drifted open. Inside, in the darkness, stood a small lacquer chest, and a paper lay upon it. It was an exact copy of the one in Huen's hand. He laid them side by side, and smiled between his slender black mustachios, and nodded gravely once. He motioned to Mark again, and Mark broke the

seal of the box and lifted its polished lid. Oh no, it was *not* believable this time! For within lay jade and gems and gold and precious things —such a treasure as might exist in Arabian Nights tales, but not in any twentieth century place. Mark knelt, gazing, with Alan silent at his shoulder. "It is yours, Honorable Friend," Huen told them. "My grandfather smiles among our ancestors to-day."

"What can I say to him?" Mark asked of the wide-eyed student. "How can you tell him what I want to say, *possibly?*"

The student began a gabbled speech, but Huen stopped him with a quiet gesture of one long hand. He knew what Mark wanted to say, and he smiled kindly and calmly.

The boys could not really believe it, even when they had left the house of Huen, with the box—cloaked by a neat canvas cover—carried beside them by a coolie. Everything had been moving with the swift certainty of a dream; the actual recovery of the fortune had passed in so brief a moment after the weeks of waiting and wondering at sea.

"Such things don't happen," Alan pro-

tested; "not outside of books. It *can't* have happened, you know."

At that moment there was a rush of feet behind them, and there appeared—also with the sudden inconsequence of a dream—a neat Chinese very much out of breath. He pointed to the wall of Huen's garden and to himself, and gasped out a message to the interpreter.

"He says," said the student, looking as usual, a little perplexed, "that Mr. Huen sent him quick to say he thinks it will be very safer to go by private river-boat with the honorable box. He has ordered rickshaws for you, and the boat will be waiting. It is his hospitality and his wish."

Mark and Alan looked at each other and then at the tidy and self-respecting servant in his black satin coat.

"We can't refuse," Mark said; "it would be awfully impolite, after all this. They 're such sticklers for manners."

"We 'd be just as safe on the steamer," Alan said dubiously; "safer, in fact. We could hang on to the box, and there 'd be lots of people around."

"We can't tell him we won't, though. Here

come the rickshaws now. All right, tell the boy to let Mr. Huen know that we accept with gratitude."

There were only two rickshaws, and the coolies seemed doubtful about getting another. The student, looking timid behind his shell goggles, said that he would wait and they could send one back for him. The servant gave directions to the men, and then, bowing deeply, ran off toward the walls of Huen's house.

Mark sat with the canvas-covered box between his feet, scowling alertly at the twisting streets through which the rickshaws trundled. They bumped and rattled through interminable dirty thoroughfares before a yellow glimpse of the creek opened at the end of an alleyway. The boat, when they reached it, looked a sumptuous enough craft to the boys. It was a bamboo-roofed affair with a gaudily painted prow adorned by two large eyes with which to see its way, and it was hung all about with bright ornaments. It was the last one of a string of varying boats which a launch was prepared to tow up to Changhow. The launch was already puffing, and the three boatmen seemed impatient.

"No can wait," they explained, pointing distractedly ahead, in reply to Mark's protest about the student. They seized upon the box and bundled it into the boat, so there was nothing for it but to follow. And a moment after the boys were aboard the whole flotilla got under way with a huge amount of yelling from the native boats, banging of gongs, and general hubbub. The boys stood under the low matroof of their part of the little craft, looking at the stern of the next boat.

"This is crazy," Mark said. "Why did we ever do it? I suppose we should have risked offending the old chap."

"Well, you said we could n't," Alan returned, shrugging his shoulders. "It 's too late to stop this outfit now. We 'll have to stick it."

"Think of poor little Goggles back there waiting for his rickshaw," Mark murmured regretfully.

The boat-coolies lived under the floor of the boys' apartment, in the hull of the boat and apparently without light or air. Through cracks in the floor could be seen the faint, pulsing glow of their lamp, and there rose far from appetizing whiffs of their cookery.

"Don't they give us anything to eat, I wonder?" Mark asked. "Perhaps Mr. Huen thought his dinner would last us for a while. I 'm sure I could live for a week on it. Well, we might as well sit down and look at what 's going on."

Shadowy shores slipped by. The boats were threading one of the innumerable mazy waterways that furnish the main routes of travel in this part of China. It was crowded with the dim shapes of sampans and small, squat junks. Twisting creeks joined it at intervals, and the vague land on either side seemed to bear a moving growth of masts and square sails. Little by little darkness drew down over the water, so that nothing could be seen but the near masses of boats that slid suddenly out of the dusk almost upon the craft where Mark and Alan sat silently. In the boat ahead people were burning their evening incense; the smoke of it drifted sharply in upon the boys. They saw strange little colored lamps lighted upon the high sterns of the other boats. Against the open end of the deck-house the small, square bulk of the treasure-box was outlined less and less distinctly.

It was all a dream. Even Shanghai was far away now—the bright bund, the Western faces. Was this really the safest way to go? Surely Mr. Huen must know, for he knew China. It was the Western point of view that made the Nangpoo steamer seem so very safe in retrospect. Far off sounded the mysterious booming of a temple-gong. All a dream!

"I 'm dog-tired," said Mark, rousing. "Let 's try to get some sleep, if they 'll let us with their eternal jabbering. I 'll take first watch, and wake you presently."

So Alan lay down, with his arm over the little box, and Mark sat upon the other side of it. He found it difficult to keep awake. The air seemed thick and suffocating; his head dropped forward and he recovered himself with a start. The low chatter of the coolies became less distinct, the rapping of the pipes below blurred into one sound. The boat-noises dwindled; night pressed in heavily, unrelieved by stars. Mark tried to push it away—the solid blackness; it choked him. Or was it the sickish fumes of the opium-lamp below? His head fell forward again. This time he did not raise it.

CHAPTER XIV

THE DEAD CITY

ALAN woke first. It was broad daylight, and the boat was motionless. The box was not between him and Mark. It was on the other side of the boat, and beside it sat a Chinese with a knife across his lap. He turned and looked at Alan. It was Chun Lon. Alan decided that this must be part of the dream, too; he looked at Mark, sleeping still, then out at the end of the boat. It was no longer attached to the train of other craft, and the launch was not in sight. Low marshy banks stretched out on either side, broken here and there by the high graves which fill every possible bit of ground in China. A man in faded blue rags stood leaning indolently on the big bow-sweep, raised picturesquely against the sky. Alan looked within again and rubbed his eyes. Chun Lon was still there, sitting motionless, with

drooping eyelids from under which he directed a a piercing gaze at the boys. But Mark was awake now, and sprang into a sitting position. Chun Lon's knife flickered dangerously near, and Mark sat still. Everything was painfully clear to him, all at once. He wondered how long they had been in their drugged sleep and what remote waterway this was where the boat drifted. He decided to assume a matter-of-fact manner with Chun Lon and try to come to terms.

"Very hungry," he said, as a beginning.

Chun Lon hooted some sort of command below, and Mark, his eyes sharply directed toward a floor-crack, saw the cook ladle a quantity of rice from the men's own rice-pot into a bowl. It arrived untampered-with, and the boys ate thankfully.

Alan addressed Mark cautiously in atrocious school-boy French, because of Chun Lon.

"Avez-vous any idée?" he inquired.

"Not much," Mark returned, gloomily.

"Pouvons-nous battez eux?" Alan hazarded, with visions of fair fight and Chinese bodies splashing one after the other into the river.

"Non," Mark said, briefly; "trop."

There were too many of them, he knew well. He could only wait and watch and hope that circumstances would show the way out of this alarming tangle.

"Where are we?" Mark demanded, turning on Chun Lon.

"Oh, piecee up-river," the Chinese answered. "Velly big wind, big tide. No can sail, no can find Shanghai. Bad joss pidgin."

The river was as calm as glass, with no whiff of breeze on it, so the statement about the head-wind Mark knew to be a lie. The other information he judged to be only too true. He fancied that it would indeed be a very long time before Shanghai could be found.

"We 're nowhere near Shanghai," he said. "See here, if you 'll get your lazy crew out and row for the Whangpoo as hard as you can, I 'll give you fifty taels."

He made this proposition as though Chun Lon were any boat *lowda* and hitherto unknown to him. He also spoke of "rowing for the Whangpoo" as though it were around the corner.

The fifty taels did not seem to stir Chun Lon at all. The box containing four thousand times

that amount stood within reach of his hand.

"Men takee little rest-sleep," he informed the boys. "We go up-river pletty soon."

Mark wished very much that he knew what "up-river" was, in this case. He wondered if they had reached Changhow in the night, passed it, indeed,—or whether Chun Lon had merely cut the tow-rope and dropped behind the unconcious procession. Mark's knowledge of the map of China was slender; times and distances were shadowy to him. Also, he had no idea of how long they had slept. He did not know that to get through the inconveniently arranged city of Changhow, one must either be pulled in a small boat up a "haulover"—a simple lock consisting of a stone chute slathered with evil and slimy mud—or must traverse afoot or in a bobbing chair a long and devious route of stone alleyways leading through the city to the canal. But here they were, undisturbed in their original boat, and, as a matter of fact, they had not yet reached the Sien Kang River—if, indeed, Chun Lon had any intentions of reaching it. He had ideas of his own.

Mark's brain was busy with plans of violence, strategy, and persuasion, but he concluded that

the best policy for the present was one of inaction and indifference. He set the rice-bowl on the floor, leaned back, and began whistling a tune. Chun Lon seemed slightly annoyed, though it was difficult to read anything in his expressionless face.

Alan turned suddenly on Mark.

"Can't you whistle anything but that?" he asked sharply.

"The Bowline Haul" stopped abruptly.

"What 's the matter with you?" Mark said; "it 's a perfectly good chantey, is n't it?"

"I know," Alan murmured, "but it made me think of Resthaven, all of a sudden."

Then it made Mark think of Resthaven, too; and the harbor, silvery bright between the elms through the window of his room; and of the good smell of bacon cooking; and of Jane singing loudly as she clattered downstairs to breakfast.

" 'Haul on the bowlin', the bowlin' haul . . .' "

"I wonder," Alan said, "if we 'll ever see old Jane again?"

"Don't be idiotic," Mark growled. "That 's like you, to moon off into the past and future. Just look right over there at the present."

Their eyes moved to where Chun Lon sat beside the fortune of the Ingrams. He was apparently a fixture. He changed not a line of his face, not an attitude of his body, for what seemed hours on end. But presently he arose, with one lithe motion, and was gone, and a dirty tatterdemalion took his place, elaborately producing a large knife which he kept firmly clasped in his grimy fist. After Chun Lon's departure there was a prodigious running about, the big sweep began creaking on its pivot, the sail was hoisted and flapped in the new wind, and the boat began to move ahead.

It was an uninteresting country. Sometimes the dull marshy land would be relieved by the far-off glimpse of a pomegranate orchard drooping with scarlet fruit, or the huddled roofs of low huts. Sometimes a solitary old woman, cutting reeds, would straighten her bent back for a moment to look at the passing boat. A line of blue hills appeared dimly on the skyline. An occasional houseboat or a brown sampan came by. The boys watched idly, hardly knowing that they watched. Once a lonely procession passed on shore—a shuffling group with flaunting paper streamers and

dully thudding gongs and a wailing as of spirits in anguish. Eight men staggered beneath a great red box; paper umbrellas blazoned with symbols of honor bobbed behind, following to the ancestral tomb some local celebrity. And once a boatload of men drifted by, all yelling together, setting off long strings of firecrackers, blowing upon conchs, and banging on gongs. No reason was apparent for their behavior. It was just China—mourning, rejoicing, in its own noisy way.

Presently the boys talked more freely, confident in the ignorance of their new guard.

"There 's absolutely nothing to do," Mark said. "There are too many of them for us to overpower. It would n't do any good to shout at one of these boats that pass; our ruffians would throttle us before we could get help."

"Probably the other boat-people are ruffians, too," Alan suggested.

"Probably," Mark agreed, gloomily. "Oh, I don't know, though. Lots of 'em are decent, honest, straight enough chaps, they say. But it would n't work."

"You might offer Chun Lon more money."

"That would n't work, either. It would take

the whole treasure to buy him off, and I 'm not going to sacrifice that, after all this, till the last gasp. No, there 's not a thing to do but wait and see what turns up."

"What do you suppose their idea is?" Alan asked.

"Don't know," said his brother. "Get us off in some lonely place, I suppose, and either kill us, maroon us, or shut us up, while they skip off with the box. What we do depends on what they do. Good heavens, how I wish I had a revolver!"

"I suppose Mr. Tyler ought to have seen that we had one."

"How could anybody imagine a moving-picture stunt like this? It was all our fault for being such geese as to believe in that boat yarn in the first place. We might have known old Huen would n't rig up any such plan."

"But you don't know anything, in China," Alan objected.

"That 's very true, too," Mark agreed, shaking his head.

Night had come again—twilight—blurring the forbidding, unfamiliar landscape. Small mist-wraiths coiled up from the warm face of

the water and scattered at the slow splash of the *yulow*. This was a lonely place. Little villages had dropped behind; their lamps burned dimly far astern. Occasionally a great junk, her square sails blotting the sky, flew past with her crew singing in weird unison their wailing oar-song. Sometimes the man in the prow of the boat sent forth a tremulous, eerie cry to the wind. Herons rose now and then from the bank, flapping ponderously up from the reeds with a mournful croak.

There seemed, all at once, to be some commotion among the crew. Again came a running to and fro, a quick jabbering. Then there loomed against the pallid west the uneven grassy outline of a crumbling city-wall, fallen here and there in rounded gaps and here and there rising to its full height, black and solid. The boat was run into a reedy inlet where no current stirred. She was poled and pushed and pulled in among a tangle of rushes and marsh-grass, and came to rest.

Chun Lon's figure darkened the open end of the boys' quarters, and he beckoned with one thin finger outlined against the dusk. One of the boat-coolies shouldered the box and trotted

out with it. Mark and Alan sprang up and followed then, and climbed out, stiff and uncertain, upon the bank. The boat-crew was straggling toward the city-wall, and Chun Lon walked very courteously beside the boys. Perhaps they could have escaped then, but there was the box to be considered, bobbing ahead on the shoulder of a coolie. No, this was not the time.

They entered the city through a broken bronze door above which hung a silent gong. Within the gates all was utterly still. Gaunt shapes of stone dwellings rose darkly against the lesser dark. Gradually the boys began to realize a strange thing. This was a dead city. Here no human creature lived; no eyes looked down from these blank windows. It was one of the places where the Tai-pings had wrought destruction and desolation half a century before. The flow of civilization had passed it by; no new inhabitants had come to build up its toppling walls and clear its ruined, haunted streets. Only a few wary peasants lived like animals in hollowed huts outside its walls.

Behind a mottled marble fish-pond where

golden carp once sailed, and where green slime now streaked the worn stone, rose the curved roofs of a deserted mansion. Silver bells had swung from its eaves long ago, and its carved portal had been enriched with precious jade and lacquer, long since vanished. Fallen tracery and crumbling stone now clogged its grass-grown gate, and some little beast squealed in the dark as Chun Lon set his foot across the threshold. Within, lofty rooms opened duskily to left and right; many had the sky for ceiling, some still kept a hint of gilded beams and black-wood rafters. In this dim, eerie hall the boat-coolies established themselves, kindling a small fire toward which they extended thin, dirty hands. The smoke of pipes began to curl upward into the gloom above.

Mark and Alan were hurried on into a small room where a stout wooden door still swung on bronze hinges. The door closed, there was a clash of bolts, and they were alone, face to face, in total darkness.

"Well," Alan said, "I hope you 're satisfied. You wanted to wait until something definite happened. It has."

"It 's definite, all right," Mark said; "but at least it 's something decided, something to work on, anyway."

"By the time you 've worked it out," Alan grumbled, "our friends will be halfway to the ends of the earth with the box. Unless they murder us first, which is likely."

"More likely they 'll merely leave us to starve. Simpler for them and more unpleasant for us."

"We might feel around and see what sort of a hole this is," Alan suggested. "There might be a way out."

"And there might not—which is more probable. No, wait till they 're happily asleep over their opium before you go ramping around in here."

They stooped and touched the floor, and, finding that it was cold and rather slimy, they decided to remain standing. They stood quietly. There was a sound of water dripping somewhere; in the corner something rustled and clicked. Alan started.

"What 's that?" he whispered.

"I 've no idea," Mark said. "I 've given up wondering about things."

"Do you remember a story," Alan said, after a pause, "where somebody was put into a pit, or somewhere in the dark, and they thought it was empty till they heard little hissings and saw eyes—and it was full of cobras?"

"It was a bully yarn," Then after an enlightening moment, Mark said. "Oh bosh, Alan! You work your imagination overtime."

But he turned his eyes, wide against the dark, and scowled uncertainly into the corner, where there now was no sound.

CHAPTER XV

INGRAM PLUCK

TO Mr. Tyler, in Shanghai, had come a young Chinese student full of grievances about a rickshaw that never arrived. He had been obliged to go to the steamer, after all, and had missed it. He had spent the night in Nangpoo; it had all been most inconvenient. Mr. Tyler managed to draw the whole story from him, in bits, and then he anxiously despatched a message to Nangpoo for Huen. Huen, in his answer, was gravely astounded and much concerned. He had no knowledge of such a plan. He blamed himself deeply for not seeing that the young men had a more efficient guard and that they boarded the steamer safely. He was covered with despair and remorse and beat his miserable breast. He was doing all in his power to trace the unfortunate descendants of the honorable Ingram.

Mr. Tyler threw down the letter and dropped

his chin in his hand. There lay before him the disagreeable duty of cabling Mr. Bolliver that the boys were in trouble and missing. He reproached himself for not going in person with them to Nangpoo, but his own business had been such as to keep him in Shanghai, and it had seemed a simple enough expedition.

"They did n't know the people; they did n't know the country," he mused. "But how could I guess the man would load them with gems? Shall I never learn to understand the Chinese? Eh, dear me—and I must let Bart know."

But first of all he telephoned the consulate and the municipal building and set in motion the slow-turning machinery of the law, in the hope that something might penetrate to that unknown waterway whither the kidnappers' boat had fled.

"They might have done so many things, those villains," Mr. Tyler sighed. "So many!"

And then he wrote his cablegram.

The cable, of course, did not reach Mr. Bolliver at once, nor, fortunately, did it reach the aunts at all, as it was sent to Mr. Bolliver's Boston office and forwarded to him. Those poor old ladies were pitifully distressed enough with-

out any such crashing news as this. The message, flashed from Honolulu, finally reached the *Kyoto Maru* when the news had nearly returned whence it came. For the big Japanese liner was only three days away from Yokohama now, swinging steadily across the last blue reaches of the Pacific.

A steward brought the message to where Mr. Bolliver and Jane sat over their luncheon. Mr. Bolliver put on his glasses and lifted the slip of paper, where the words which had raced so far to reach him stared up blackly. With admirable restraint he folded the paper and put it, without haste, into his pocket. He picked up his fork and went on eating, with no notion of what was on his plate.

"What was it?" Jane asked, her eyes steadily on his face.

"Business," said Mr. Bolliver; "troublesome business, my dear."

"I can't tell her now," he muttered later, striding fiercely up and down the deck. "Shanghai may have better news. There 'll be time before then for much to happen. And if she must know, the tidings will be no more terrible then than now."

But Mr. Bolliver thought that in all his long and hard-fought life he had never had a greater task than to keep an unruffled spirit for Jane, who, with the light come back to her eyes, was counting the hours to Shanghai. It was not so difficult to conceal anxiety, there in Nagasaki, the day they went ashore while the ship coaled. Jane was too much delighted by this fairyland to notice any sort of expression Mr. Bolliver might wear.

They left the big steamer, where hundreds of toiling coolie-women passed the coal up the side in pitifully small baskets, and wandered off through the city. Jane had scarcely believed, till now, that she was really on the other side of the world. It had all been so swift and sudden, and so anxious. Even now she fancied she might be imagining these picture-book people and strange shops. She hadn't believed, for instance, that she must really take off her shoes before she could enter a temple; she was enormously amused at such tales coming true. Her low tan shoes were easily disposed of; Mr. Bolliver preferred to don a pair of gaudy plush slippers over his boots.

In Nagasaki Jane saw all the old, the tradi-

tional, and was oblivious to most of the new. Mr. Bolliver, with a sigh, would point out an ancient shrine on the opposite side of the street, while they passed, unseeing, some American atrocity on the near side. But there was still the sliding music of samisens behind paper lattices, still the drone of gourd-beating priests in half-lit temples, the pad of rickshaw runners' feet, the sight of stately robes and obis tied according to a tradition that has lasted a hundred centuries.

They walked back in the dusk, when every rickshaw had lighted a flitting paper lantern and the water beneath the curved bridges gleamed with the reflection of many-colored lights. So brief a glimpse of Japan—yet it had been so very Japanese and so like a thing unreal made actual for a moment. Then the ship again and the outward way once more, this time, at last, for Shanghai!

Jane, curling rapturously to sleep in her cabin, whispered, "We 're coming—coming—coming!" with the thrum of the engine.

Mr. Bolliver, very wide awake in his, paced up and down.

"What a fool an old man can be," he said aloud. "Ah, my poor little Jane Ingram!"

So it was Shanghai at last! The *Kyoto Maru* left the blue water behind, as the *Delphian* had done, and nosed into the wide, turbid sea at the mouth of the Yangtze River. How Jane's heart would have leapt if she had realized that those gray funnels were the *Delphian's,* among the clustering stacks around Woo-sung! The *Kyoto Maru* passed them swiftly by; the *go-downs* of Woo-sung dropped out of sight; the Whangpoo twisted ahead. Sampans besieged the ship, offering strange food, toys, and trinkets to the sight-seers at the rail. Yellow men swarmed, it seemed, on the face of the river; boats flung themselves perilously across the very bow of the liner. At last she swung around Pu Tung Point and came to anchor off the bund.

Mr. Bolliver shook his head and caught his breath, for many reasons. Crowding memories of many another arrival in Shanghai, terrible anxiety connected with the present one, held him silent and grave as he and Jane stood wait-

ing their turn at the launch. Jane was wondering whether this was like her expectation—these glimpses of clipped green lawns and dark trees, hotels and *hongs,* consulates and banks, lining the water-front. She could hardly have thought it would be a shore-line of blue porcelain pagodas and golden temples, yet—

But the launch was waiting. Mr. Bolliver took Jane firmly by the arm and they descended the gangway-steps.

Shanghai, to Jane, did not exist until she could see the boys.

"But they 're not in Shanghai," Mr. Bolliver explained hastily. "They had to go off to wherever the T'ang Min people live. We can' t tell where they are until we 've seen my firm."

Then why could n't she go with him to Tyler, Bolliver & Tyler's? Why must she stay at the hotel, alone? Mr. Bolliver decided that after all she must n't stay there, alone. So she came along, half-seeing the cool bund, half-wondering at the shops that were so different and at the hurrying foreign crowd, but hardly realizing their existence.

Within the high, shaded office of his firm Mr. Bolliver cried, "Well, Nick!" to the dig-

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nified Mr. Tyler, and then laid a quick finger on his lips, with a glance toward Jane. They stood for a few minutes talking of the voyage and of how many years it had been since Bart had last stood in his office; then Mr. Tyler brought a great book with pictures of ships that had sailed in the tea trade and suggested to Jane that it might interest her. He and Mr. Bolliver went quickly into the inner office and closed the door.

"As if I were a baby, rather," Jane thought, "to be amused with picture-books while they talk."

She looked down at the volume, open on her knee. The murmur of voices came from the inner room. Some one's fist crashed down on a table. " . . . Not possible!" Mr. Bolliver's voice cried quickly. Other bits of sentences followed. " . . . All my fault, Nick." . . . "We 'll not give up hoping."

Jane could not bear it longer. The book slid off her lap with a crash as she sprang up, and Mr. Bolliver—perhaps warned by the sound—flung open the door.

"What is it?" she demanded, facing him in the doorway. "What is it you have n't been

telling me all the time? Something 's happened to the boys!"

Mr. Bolliver stood hesitant, and Nicholas Tyler came up behind him.

"Won't she have to know?" he said quietly.

So Mr. Bolliver told her the bare facts, and Mr. Tyler wove in the few strange details of the disappearance that were known to him.

Jane stood quite still, and her mouth grew straighter and her eyes deeper as she heard. She knew, somehow, that she had to hear it, that she had come all the way to China to be told this, that this was what had haunted her in the Resthaven garden and made her pillow fearful by night. Strange things followed one another disjointedly across her mind: Mark saying, "Good-by, old Jane," in the sunset; Grandfather Mark writing steadily in his log-book, "My dear father was lost with his ship, the *Fortune of the Indies*. and all therein . . ."; the little aunts in Resthaven, who already had lost three Mark Ingrams; the ship model between the sconces. She thought she almost hated the model now, that had held a decree of disaster in its old hull. Its fair sails towered over her and the keen prow bore

"Now let's go and do something about it"

straight down upon her, thundering nearer with a whirl of spray. This was no model, but the *Fortune of the Indies* herself, dreadful and beautiful—and the waters were engulfing Jane. But they whirled and cleared and parted. Windows seemed to spin into place from somewhere, and Jane saw that she stood in a dim Shanghai office and that Mr. Bolliver was looking at her anxiously from the door.

Jane stooped and picked up the book she had dropped. She smoothed out a ruffled page mechanically and laid the volume on the table.

"Yes, I had to know," she agreed. "Thank you, Mr. Tyler. Now let 's go and do something about it."

She walked steadily to the door and stood beside it, waiting. Nicholas Tyler brought his hand down on Mr. Bolliver's shoulder.

"My faith, Bart!" he cried, "I 'd rather deal with an Ingram than any other soul on God's earth!"

CHAPTER XVI

THE SHAM-POO

"WELL, all seems to be serene outside," Mark whispered. "Beasts and snakes in the corners or not, it 's time we found out what this place is like."

They each moved cautiously to a wall and began feeling the slimy stone. They came quietly toward one another, working carefully all over the wall-surface. Mark's hand passed unexpectedly over a moist little lizard, and he jumped back. The creature clicked and hissed, and scurried off up a crack.

"That 's your cobra," Mark said to Alan. "Glory, he did give me a turn, though!"

The tour of the room was completed, and the boys stood together in the middle of it.

"There 's absolutely nothing but the door, and that 's bolted," Alan said.

"And if we try anything on it, we 'll wake

up our heathen friends," Mark added. "Hop on my shoulders, will you, and see what the ceiling 's like."

Alan scrambled up and stood precariously on his brother's shoulders, Mark's arms twined around the other's legs. He stretched his hands out.

"It 's wood—beams and stuff—rottenish," he stated.

"Rotten enough to give anywhere?" Mark asked.

"I don't know. Go over toward the corner; it 's apt to be punk where water 's run in, down the joinings. Easy now, I 'm no acrobat!"

"Easy yourself," Mark whispered; "you 're no bit of thistledown."

"Wait a minute!" Alan muttered. "Stand still. There 's a hole I can get my hand into."

"For heaven's sake don't go hauling anything that 'll make a big smash," Mark cautioned.

"I 'm not. It 's rotten as can be. I 'm easing off little chunks of it with my hands. Here, you take 'em; they 'll make a noise if I drop 'em."

Mark reached up, and Alan put into his hand crumbling slivers of rotten wood.

A little at a time the hole grew larger.

"There 's a whole board I can wiggle loose, if I keep at it," Alan explained. "Can you hang on any longer? By jingo! it goes right out-of-doors."

Indeed, a star looked strangely in at the ragged opening from a small space of distant sky.

Mark rubbed his forehead with the back of his hand.

"Skip down for a minute," he said, "before I 'm completely finished."

Alan descended, and they both stood leaning against the wall, looking up at the hole that was not yet large enough to help them.

"It all depends on whether or not I can get that board away," Alan said. "I don't know how far it keeps on being rotten."

"Have another go at it." Mark commanded. "I 'm ready, if you are. Up!"

He stood swaying to his balance, and Alan caught again at the crumbling beams. He tugged at the edges of the hole, and something gave all at once with a muffled, crunching noise.

Alan lurched wildly and snatched at the other side of the hole. The opening yawned wide, filled with stars. Alan pulled himself up, kicking desperately, flung a leg over the wall-top and sat astride a stout beam, looking out over soundless dim roofs lit only by vague starlight.

"Quick!" he whispered, reaching down his hand to Mark.

His brother caught it and scaled the wall, and both slid cautiously down the treacherous roof and softly dropped to the ground below. The rambling wings of the ruined house stretched around them. They stumbled over fallen slabs of marble and slipped on the mossy edge of unseen, empty lotus-pools. Now following the wall, now creeping out into the shadow, they won at last to the gate by which they had entered the mansion. In the great hall the boat-coolies lay stretched in uncouth postures, sleeping heavily beside the last embers of their fire. The opium-lamp that had drugged their senses till dawn smoked faintly. Farther on, from a doorway, another faint glow crept out.

Mark and Alan slipped past the coolies and flattened themselves against the wall outside this door. Mark, with infinite caution, peered

around the stone doorpost. With his side toward them, Chun Lon sat bending above a small lamp. His long knife lay beside him, and there was ranged at his feet a glimmering group of golden bars and jade cups. A ruby shone like fire in the palm of his yellow hand. The treasure box stood open before him.

With one silent leap Mark hurled himself upon Chun Lon, a knee firmly planted on his chest, a hand pressed crushingly over the Chinaman's opened mouth. Alan was beside him now, the knife in his hand, clasped till his knuckles grew white. Chun Lon's eyes never left the gleaming blade that hung above him.

They gagged him with Alan's handkerchief and Mark's necktie, and bound him hand and foot with his own gay, tasseled sash. They wrenched the ruby from his closed hand, and hurriedly packed into its box the fortune of the Ingrams—all with a swift, tense precision. Then Mark quickly blew out the lamp and closed the moldering door. It fastened with a great wooden pin, and Alan drew this into place.

"To the boat!" Mark whispered, once clear of

the hall. "And look sharp, in case they 've posted a guard."

But there was no sound, no movement, as they stumbled on through weed-grown streets, in the shadow of silent houses, over carven stone bridges that spanned only a trickle of slimy water, and out at last through the city-gate to the reeds of the river-bank. There they stopped, breathless, to look back at the ghost city, black beneath the stars.

"Will you ever forget the look in his eyes?" Alan breathed.

"Not for a while," Mark said. "The sooner we get out of China, the better."

That, however, was quite another story —getting out of China. Time enough for that when they had escaped this sinister city. But there lay the boat, still and untenanted, pulled up into the sedge. The boys got the precious box safely on board, and then, leaping into the ooze, pulled and pushed and struggled till the boat swung out, slithering through muddy reeds, and floated clear. They scrambled aboard, and with mighty thrusts poled her out into the rippled water and turned her into the

stream. For her size she was very light, with her bamboo deckhouse; she drifted buoyantly, nosing along beside the dark banks.

"We can't see how this sail proposition works now," Mark said. "We 'll get it up, if we can, with the first wink of daylight. If we keep poling and *yulowing,* we 'll get on fairly fast."

So pole and *yulow* they did, till their weary arms could move no longer, and a flat sun rose through the mist across rice-paddies. They let her drift then, and Mark steered while Alan routed out a great bag of rice and the boat-brazier.

"I don't exactly relish boiling it in river-water," he said, "but seeing that we 'll have to live on this stuff for dear knows how long, we might just as well begin to get used to it."

The rice was edible and welcome, despite an entire absence of salt and the presence of a curious muddy taste. They ate sitting cross-legged on deck, Mark with his arm hooked over the steering-oar and an eye for the freaks of the winding stream. The wind was coming now, right astern, and the boys got up the sail, which they thought a weirdly contrived affair.

So, sailing and yawing and *yulowing,* the strange craft flitted off down the river-reaches —what river her captain knew not, but he prayed that it might join the Whangpoo, for near the mouth of the Whangpoo lay Shanghai.

But Mark knew little of the devious ways of Chinese streams. This one had no affiliation whatever with the Whangpoo. It was still winding leisurely toward the Sien Kang. For two foreigners with no map, no compass, total ignorance of the Chinese language, and a strong desire for speed and secrecy to try to reach Shanghai in a native boat from somewhere near Saoshing was certainly utmost folly. Even without a sight of the map, Mark recognized this to be so, but he saw no other solution of their problem. They had no money—nothing but a box of treasure and a few "cash" which they had found in the boat; their own money had been taken from them during that first night. If they could find a European settlement they could get help, Mark knew well, but all the towns and villages they passed presented a discouraging water-front of native

houses perched on stilts above sticky mud-flats, where pigs and pariah dogs roamed dejectedly. Beyond usually rose the grey-white shape of the pagoda, and perhaps some ancient mansions among fir-groves, but no trace of Western civilization. There might or might not be some English official, some American missionary, yet how could the boys be sure of finding him among the babbling, uncomprehending crowd?

No, it was out of the question, so they sailed on. When the wind fell, Mark and Alan each took their trick at the sweep and sculled their boat erratically onward. Many other craft passed; sometimes the Chinese stared at the boys with a shrewd, curious gaze.

"Though we must look pretty much like some sort of coolies by this time," Alan commented.

Their appearance, in truth, was rather wild. They were extremely dirty, their hair unbrushed and their faces sun-browned. Mark wore a blue linen coat which he had found on board, and looked like some strange outcast from the frontiers of civilization. Their first night they passed in some discomfort. When darkness made navigation at first difficult and

then impossible, they moored their vessel, which Mark had christened the *Sham-Poo* in a desperate spirit of merriment. They tied her up to the desolate bank of what seemed uninhabited country, and took turns at keeping a lookout, with Chun Lon's knife in reach. Mark's watch had stopped during some of the excitement, and though he had set it by the sun as accurately as possible, he mistrusted it for the purpose of telling actual time. However, it registered hours and minutes, and by it the boys timed their "watches" with shipboard precision.

Fear of pursuit by Chun Lon had died. Even if his coolies could have roused before daylight and set him free, there was no other boat at hand for the chase. In the crowded maze of waterways that netted the land it was impossible for him to know which one the boys had chosen to navigate. His natural supposition, too, would be that that they would try to retrace the route to Nangpoo, instead of turning boldly in an unknown direction. So the boys presently ceased their anxious survey of each passing boat, their startled scrutiny of every Chinese face that might be Chun Lon's.

This was new adventure now, adventure exciting, perilous, and uncertain enough without the added apprehension of pursuit.

It was not so bad, there in the boat, Mark reflected. If you looked at in the light of an exploring expedition, or of roughing it on the water, it was a pretty good sort of adventure, in fact. The lamp being out, it was impossible to see the strange, many-legged things which crept and crawled and clambered in the boat. On the other hand, there were the same stars to see that hung over Resthaven, good familiar lamps by which to steer a ship. Then he remembered that there were no stars at this hour in Resthaven, and that Jane, in all likelihood, was walking out to Bluff Point before luncheon. What would he have thought if he could have known that these stars of the Eastern Hemisphere hung above Jane, too!

By the time that Alan went on watch and Mark lay down for the dubious comfort of sleep on the hard floor, a late moon had climbed above the dark, waving fingers of the reeds. Alan watched it swim upward between the stars, faintly lighting the flat bank and the stream on which there sometimes passed the mysterious shape of a silently gliding junk.

CHAPTER XVII

PING-PONG

DAWN brought proof that the shore was not uninhabited, after all. There materialized gradually—apparently from the reeds—eight men, four old women, three grass-cutters, some beggars, countless half-naked children, and a scattering of lean dogs. Where they came from was a question; what they intended to do was another.

"Let 'em goggle," said Mark. "They won't even have the satisfaction of seeing the strange and unusual diet of the foreigner. Look lively with your rice-pot, O Honorable Brother."

But the crowd manifested such interest in the boys' method of eating rice with their fingers (they preferred these to the greasy chop-sticks of the departed crew) that at last Alan jumped up and made for the mooring-rope.

"I 'm sick of this exhibition breakfast idea," he said. "I vote we eat as we go."

"Well, let 's do a proper send-off, for luck," Mark said. "They 're really a friendly lot, and we might as well give 'em their money's worth."

So, with a banging of the big gong astern, the little *Sham-Poo* got under way, her square sail creaking as it went up. One or two of the Chinese on the bank shrieked "*Yang-kwei-tse!*" (foreign devil!) but most of them grinned amiably enough. Some of the children ran down the bank a little way, and then the whole group was lost to sight around a bend. Mark and Alan were off on another day of their adventure.

They still had no intention of leaving the comparative safety and certainty of the boat to seek favor of authority ashore in any of the huddled towns they passed.

"No more dealings with the heathen Chinee," Mark had said. "They may be all right if you know 'em—but we don't. At least this hollow bamboo our castle is, and I mean to stick by it."

This remark was made during what the boys were pleased to call dinner-time. The dismal

sameness of their meals made morning, noon, and evening seem strangely alike.

"Do you blow up, or anything, if you eat nothing but rice?" Alan inquired.

"If you do," Mark grunted, "the Chinese Empire—Republic, I should say—would be blown off the face of the map by this time. I must say, though, they don't all boil it in mud."

"And think of Mr. Huen's dinner!" Alan sighed.

"Don't think of it!" Mark counseled. "It 's your trick at the *yulow*. Up and doing, now!"

It was during that day that they met Ping-Pong. (She was thus named, afterward, by Mark.)

She was, perhaps, two years old, and she was floating placidly down the stream in a boat surely made for no one larger than herself. It was not exactly a boat, though it was boat-shaped, and it floated rather lopsidedly.

"What in the name of the biggest joss in China!" said Alan, who was at the bow.

The *Sham-Poo* was overtaking the strange apparition ahead. Mark leaned out from the *yulow* to look.

"It seems a bit unsafe, to me," he said. "How come?"

"Unsafe!" Alan cried. "That 's putting it in a mild— Hi!"

For at that moment the baby, suddenly spying and snatching for a floating leaf, capsized her box and disappeared under the muddy water with a small wail. Mark was absolutely unhesitating. With one swift look to gage the distance, he dived off the stern of the *Sham-Poo,* and reappeared, sputtering, with the shipwrecked infant clutched under his arm. Alan hauled them both on board the *Sham-Poo,* which, her helm abandoned, had run herself gently aground on the bank.

"Now what?" said Alan to his brother, who stood wringing the water out of his clothes.

"Well, you could n't let the thing drown, could you?" Mark demanded. "We 'll hand it over to the next old woman we run across on the bank."

"I was afraid you might want to add it to the expedition," Alan said.

"Law!" said Mark. "This boat is in trouble enough without Chink babies crawling around in it."

"I wonder how on earth she came to be barging along in her private pinnace à la Lady of Shalott, anyway," Alan mused. "Her mamma must be in a stir."

But they did not know the ways of China. They did not know that in this vast land of fearful poverty and teeming life, when there is not enough rice for the whole family, girl babies must go—in spite of Western law and Western disapproval. For what good is a girl! Can she intercede, after one is dead, with those august ancestors? Can she light at one's grave the needful incense? What is she but a burden to the household, a useless emptier of the rice-pot? She must be thrown out that the illustrious sons may live. Poor mother, who had sent this baby to sail down the stream! If she drowned, the woman would not know. That she might grow to happy womanhood somewhere and marry a prince of the province was a possibility which might be held fast in the imagination.

Meanwhile, the baby lay in the stern of the *Sham-Poo* and blinked her very black eyes at the boys. Her hair was very black, too; it lay in wet wisps against her round little olive face.

She had on no clothes at all, and the river-water dripped off her smooth, plump, little person.

"She 's shivering, the poor little toad!" said Mark.

He fetched the blue coolie coat, which hung, dry, over the stern. Measuring his protégée with a judicial eye, he cut its sleeves jaggedly with Chun Lon's knife till they were of a length more suited to the baby's small arms.

"She 's muddyish," he said, pausing in his tailoring. "Mop her up a bit, will you, Alan?"

"If you think I 'm going to play nursemaid to your heathen infant, you 're mistaken," said Alan, pushing the *Sham-Poo's* nose out from the bank.

"Bosh!" said Mark. He did the mopping himself, and Ping-Pong curled her toes and gurgled.

"Oh, you like being mopped up, do you?" Mark inquired of her. "Here, stick in your fist. This is an elegant garment I 've made for you, Miss."

Happed up in the abbreviated blue linen coat, Ping-Pong did present a quaint figure.

Mark considered her proudly, his head on one side.

"She 's a jolly little piece of work," he said. "Look at her! Wake up, you old stick, and *look* at her!"

The baby crawled toward Alan, who was regarding her dubiously, and made a few monosyllabic remarks which might have been youthful attempts at almost any language. Mark slapped his knee.

"There 's a discovery!" he said. "All babies talk Chinese to begin with, and branch out into other tongues later on. Here 's proof!"

"Oh, pshaw!" said Alan. "This is n't any time for idiotic theories. Do something about sailing this boat, and keep your weather eye out for that old woman."

"What old woman?" Mark asked.

"The old woman we 're going to hand over the kid to," his brother said.

"Assuredly," said Mark. "Port, there, you lubber, or you 'll have us up a tree. Whoa, Ping-Pong! Stop climbing up my leg!"

But old women seemed scarce along these

shores; indeed, none of the people they saw were within hail. Then Alan suddenly pushed the helm hard over, and the *Sham-Poo* lurched half up the bank, almost on top of a group of indignant working-people trotting home from the fields. Their voices rose in shrill protest, which grew when Mark appeared holding the now sleepy Ping-Pong, whom he offered them over the boat's side.

"You take!" he begged, with eloquent gestures of explanation.

But the clamor grew louder. The cries of "*Yang-kwei-tse!*" waxed more shrill. A clattering shower of stones hopped about the *Sham-Poo's* deck, and a slap of sticky mud landed on her roofing an inch away from Alan's eye.

"We or she or both or all are evidently unpopular," Mark said. "Shove! Shove like a good fellow, Alan!"

He put Ping-Pong down hastily and joined his brother in pushing off from the bank.

"Perhaps we did n't go at it right," he mused, in mid-stream. "I would n't blame them for not liking the way you charged right into them, old scout. When I said, the next old

woman we run across, I did n't mean run *into*. Better luck next time."

But "next time," which was at the slimy jetty of a small and dirty village, brought no better result; indeed, the stones were larger and the yells louder.

"These are all the lowest kind of river-folk," Mark said. "If we could get hold of some one intelligent, it would be all right."

"You 've done it again, my lad," Alan muttered. "We 're saddled with your precious Ping-Pong for the rest of the trip."

"I 'd rather have her for shipmate than Chun Lon, any day in the week," Mark commented.

"Oh, well," Alan said, hauling at the *yulow*, "if you 're going to be absurd!"

Ping-Pong had curled herself to sleep on a mat, with a thumb in her mouth. She sighed at intervals, just like any baby asleep.

"But she 's too yellowish," Alan objected.

"What 's the diff?" Mark yawned. "I think she 's jolly, even if complicating."

It was now, indeed, a strangely assorted outfit: one native boat, whose eyes at the prow certainly did not aid her in finding her way; two

dirty and apprehensive American youths, one of them somewhat damp and muddy; one box containing two hundred thousand taels of treasure; one amiably disposed Chinese baby, origin unknown, destination equally so. There they were, somewhere in the province of Kechiang, and there, so far as Mark could see, they would continue to be for some time.

It is odd how the present fills every chink of the brain, eclipsing everything behind. Resthaven was a dream, the *Delphian* a memory; the *Sham-poo* was reality, and Mark's newest problem absorbed him and knit his brow.

"What do you feed 'em?" he inquired, from the *yulow*.

"Who?" Alan demanded.

"Babies," Mark said.

"Milk," retorted his brother.

"I mean something we have," Mark explained.

"Rice, then, of course, O Thou of Mighty Intellect," Alan chanted.

"I suppose that 'll have to be it," Mark agreed. "She *is* biggish, though, is n't she. When do they stop having bottles?"

"I 'm no baby book," Alan said.

"Well, cook it up extra fancified," Mark ordered. "It 'll have to do."

"Glory!" Alan said. "It 'll be ambrosia. Why, I 've seen 'em over here, no bigger than that, chewing on pickled fish-tails or something."

"Miss Ping-Pong chews no fish-tails," Mark stated. "Not after I 've gone to all the trouble of saving her from a muddy grave. Chef, prepare the rice."

At dusk, when the brazier beneath the rice-pot made a small creeping glow within the dark recesses of the *Sham-poo,* Ping-Pong woke and wailed, as any frightened, hungry baby would wail, waking at twilight in a strange place. Mark abandoned the helm and squatted before her.

"That 's all right," he said cheerily. "We 're all in the same boat, you know. Literally, by Jimminy! Dinner 's coming pronto."

But Ping-Pong wailed the more. Mark was about to reach out and pick her up, to bounce her into a good humor, when he caught his brother's stern eye. He sheepishly resumed the tiller, compromising by snapping his fingers

encouragingly in Ping-Pong's direction and making surprising faces at her.

A little later they moored the *Sham-Poo* and lowered the sail, a thing they now accomplished with much more speed and skill than at first. The three of them formed a semicircle around the brazier, with the darkening river behind them, and they began their dinner. Mark, to Alan's disgusted amusement, insisted on taking Ping-Pong upon his knee and feeding her rice before he began his own. Soon she was plunging her own small fist into the bowl and licking her fingers approvingly, while she gazed complacently at her rescuer.

"It 's not teaching her the best of table-manners," Mark said, shaking his head; "but that 's a minor consideration—very minor."

"What is n't a minor consideration is how much longer we 're going to go cruising all over the Flowery Kingdom with our menagerie," Alan remarked.

"Well," his brother said, "as far as I can see, as I 've said before, we 'll simply have to keep on going till we run across a European settlement in some big place; people who

can understand our yarn and believe it when they understand it."

"For all you know, we may be making for the Himalaya Mountains," Alan suggested.

"Not we," Mark said. "I believe the sun still rises in the east and sets in the west, and rivers run toward larger rivers or the sea, even in China. We 've been sailing steadily in approximately one direction."

"How do you know it 's the right direction, though?"

"Well, if this meandering body of water joins a bigger one, there 'll be bigger towns on it, and bigger people in them, and— Hi, Miss Ping-Pong, stop flinging rice upon me! If you 've done, go and curl up on your mat and go by-by."

But Ping-Pong wished to stay with her friend. When he sought to remove her, she clung to his legs like a small barnacle, so he let her be, and she rolled herself up between his feet with a remark intelligible to herself alone.

"See, she knows I 'm her rescuer; she 's attached to me," he said, beaming.

"She knows you have the rice-bowl, more

likely," Alan commented, laughing. "That 's what she 's attached to."

"What base motives you give her," Mark objected. "She has higher impulses, I assure you."

"I 'd rather have a dog," Alan said, shaking the brazier.

"Plenty along the bank to choose from," Mark suggested. "If you 're jealous, you might add one to the establishment."

So they laughed, and their laughter drifted strangely out into the stillness of the Chinese creek and was lost among the oozy sedge. Ping-Pong took her thumb out of her mouth and chuckled solemnly.

"Funny little rascal!" said Alan, unbending.

CHAPTER VXIII

"SOMETHING HAPPENS"

MARK'S policy of "keeping on going till something happens" had so far been the one they had followed during this adventure, and so far it had worked, if not rapidly, fairly well. There really seemed to be nothing else to do. If they had been equipped with knowledge of the country and the language, or either separately, the plan of action could have been very different.

Mark thought it all out again, soberly, as he sat on watch beneath the stars. The baby, he admitted, certainly did n't simplify matters, but then, she was very unassuming, apparently, and surely could be easily disposed of in that "big town" which Mark forever hoped to reach.

The *Sham-Poo* swung a little, pointing her stumpy mast to first one star, then another. Mark looked up affectionately at her dark,

furled sail and her curving prow. They had tidied her up a good bit since taking command of her, and had begun to feel the sweet pride of ownership. Mark next looked toward his latest charge, who had waked and again was weeping, beating her heels upon the mat and waving her hands, entangled in the still too long sleeves of the blue linen jacket.

"Hush, then!" said Mark, sibilantly.

As no effect was produced by these words, he cast a stealthy glance within, where Alan slept heavily, and picked up Ping-Pong in a hit-or-miss fashion by whatever arm or leg came handy. But he soon discovered that she fitted very naturally into one position on his arm, her head over his shoulder. Holding her thus, it also came to him that an obvious thing to do was to pat her on the back, which he did, heartily and rhythmically, so that her sobs were jolted out of her in a sort of four-four time.

"My stars, I wish I knew how to say 'Hush' to you in Chinese," he murmured. "I don't think I even know how to stop a simple United States baby from crying. There, there, now! What 's the idea, anyway?"

With another look toward his brother, Mark

presently began to sing in a muffled voice:

A Yankee ship came down the river,
Blow, boys, blow!
Her masts did bend and her sails did shiver,
Blow, my bully boys, blow!

If ever there was an incongruous picture, here it was! This unkempt Ingram, cross-legged beneath the stars on the deck of a native boat moored in the wilds of a Kechiang creek, singing to sleep a Chinese baby with the strains of a sail-setting chantey! The aunts, the dear little gray aunts, could they have seen or even imagined it, would have raised their hands and swooned. Mark, deeply absorbed in his occupation, never thought of the absurdity of it. If he had, he would have roared with mighty laughter.

What do you think they had for dinner?
Blow, boys, blow!
Sea-water soup, but somewhat thinner!
Blow, my bully boys, blow!

So crooned Mark's baritone, leashed in to a murmur. Ping-Pong's small golden fist clutched his lapel; her head slipped lower and lower upon his shoulder; her long black eye-

lashes quivered and at length lay heavily upon her porcelain cheeks. She was asleep.

Mark was about to put her down again upon her mat, but decided that it looked rather hard and chilly and that if he did she 'd doubtless wake and howl again. So he sat with her in his arms, his back against the *yulow*-pivot, looking at the moon rise over her drooping dark head. Alan, rousing before his watch, looked out and saw him thus.

"Well, I 'll be everlastingly dumfisticated!" he said to himself vehemently, and lay down again, marveling.

After breakfast the next morning, while the *Sham-Poo* flitted down the interminable sluggish reaches of the stream and Ping-Pong disported herself in the sunshine at the stern, Alan suddenly made frantic gestures of despair and sat down beside the mast.

"What in the world ails you?" Mark asked him. "Am I to have a maniac on my hands now?"

"It 's you that 's the maniac," Alan protested. "Honestly, you know, this is fantastic, perfectly and teetotally fantastic. It

can't go on. Even you will have to give *in* when the rice gives *out.*"

"There 's loads of rice," Mark rejoined. "If we wait long enough, something 's bound to happen."

"I 've heard you say that before. If we wait long enough, we 're all bound to die some day. We were idiots not to turn back toward Nangpoo when we got away from that beastly haunted city."

"Yes, and have Chun Lon come boiling after us hot-foot, with murder in his eye. It 's the thing he 'd think we 'd naturally do."

Alan pondered for a moment.

"I never thought of that," he conceded.

"I did," Mark said.

"But really," Alan went on, "we can't keep sailing around with this Chinee kid."

"We can't chuck her overboard, either."

"We could put her on the shore near one of these villages. Somebody 'd be sure to find her."

"Oh, she 's not hurting you," Mark retorted. "If she turns out to be 'bad joss pidgin,' we 'll do something. Wait till it happens."

"I 'm waiting," Alan agreed hollowly.

Ping-Pong crawled and toddled about the *Sham-Poo,* amusing herself with things she found or lying on her back blowing bubbles at the sky. She was very unexacting in her attitude toward life in general. Already she was beginning to develop an Oriental placidity remarkable to behold.

"You see how philosophically *she* takes it," Mark pointed out. "Employ your time profitably in contemplating all the wisdom of the East as embodied in Ping-Pong—and put a little more beef into that *yulow*-ing."

Alan merely shied a mat at his brother, and they both grinned.

And then, presently, Mark's policy was more or less justified. Something did happen. What happened was the Sien Kang River, with Changhow itself strung steaming along the water-front above a slowly moving swarm of every sort of boat.

"Well, here we are," Mark said breezily.

"Here we are where?" Alan queried.

"Somewhere definite. This is a big place. We can dig up some English-speaking person here, and get on a bit."

It took them some time to "get on" very far.

First there was the broad, yellow reach of the Sien Kang to tack across, then the great jam of water-traffic to penetrate. By dint of much manœuvering they wormed the boat at last to a landing-place below the wall, adding their shouts to the strident yells of the other boatmen in what seemed to be the current fashion.

"You stand by the boat," Mark ordered. "I 'm going ashore to find out something."

"You 'll never remember the way back," Alan protested.

"Oh yes I will. I 've booked three or four landmarks already. If we both go, we 'll probably lose the boat, and besides, we don't want to lug the box all over town."

With which he departed, pushing his way through a crowd of beggars and loafers gathered at the wall. When he had disappeared, Alan dropped his chin upon his hand and stared gloomily toward the city. At least, he and Mark had kept together thus far in their adventures. He felt singularly alone now. He scowled at Ping-Pong, who gazed unwinkingly back at him.

It was extremely hot. The bustle and din of the water-front was penetrating—likewise

the smell of it. The boat's only timepiece had gone off in Mark's pocket, and it seemed to Alan that hours went by, though how many he could not tell. Presently he became aware of some added stir among the shipping, and saw, gliding up, a blue-canopied boat full of Chinese clad in gorgeous, if somewhat spectacular, uniforms. It was a river police-boat, and it drew in beside the *Sham-Poo*. The official in command stood up in the bow, looked piercingly at Alan and his singular outfit, and then hailed him in Chinese. To this Alan replied, in English, that he did not speak the language. At that the official clambered into the bow of the *Sham-Poo* and gazed again about the boat and its personnel.

"Where you come?" he asked.

"Nangpoo," Alan answered, hugely relieved to hear something like English from this theatrically attired gentleman. The officer raised an eyebrow slightly.

"Where go?" he inquired.

"Shanghai-side."

The other eyebrow went up, and the officer peered incredulously at Alan.

"One boy; no coolie?"

"No coolie."

"No can do!" The captain was decisive. He shook his head.

'My brother is with me. He 's gone ashore," Alan supplemented, wondering if his questioner understood statements so complicated as this. He did not seem to. Instead, he pointed at Ping-Pong.

"Where got?" he demanded.

"Found her on the river," Alan explained. "No want. Give her away pretty quick."

"Hgh," said the official, as nearly as Alan could make out. The expression seemed to indicate disbelief.

"Why you go one boy?" he asked. "Coolie cost cheap. Melican no work, Chineeman work for him."

He was evidently suspicious of the *Sham-Poo* and her ill-assorted crew.

"He probably thinks we 're smuggling something," Alan thought, for he had heard tales of illicitly carried salt and devious dealings among the junk-masters.

But before he could frame a simple version of his story two men from the police-boat boarded the *Sham-Poo* and began diligently

searching her dim cabin. It took little enough seeking to reveal the treasure box—and "Aiya!" squeaked the startled official as he flung back the lid and drew aside the wrappings.

"Now the jig 's up," Alan thought desperately. "They 'll think we 've stolen it. I don't look exactly like a wealthy merchant."

He wheeled on the official. Anything to gain time, to let Mark get back.

"Wait!" he begged. "My brother will come back. We want to get to Shanghai, Shanghai-side, you know. It 's all right, really; you 'll see."

The police captain apparently thought, however—if, indeed, he understood the information at all—that this matter had passed beyond his authority and that Alan's tale should be for higher ears than his own. So the treasure-chest was swung to the brawny shoulder of one of the force, and Alan could not but follow then. The captain, however, pointed an accusing finger toward the boat.

"You take," he said sternly, indicating Ping-Pong, who was yawning small bored yawns in the shade of the matting-roof.

"No, no!" exclaimed Alan hastily, seeing an

excellent chance to part company from his brother's protégee.

"Yes, yes!" cried the official, wholly unwilling that any evidence in the case should be left behind.

So Alan, with a groan, bundled Ping-Pong under his arm, and the whole procession set forth through slimy waterside streets. At the first turn Alan cast back toward the *Sham-Poo* one despairing look. She lay quietly, her half-furled sail looped over her deck-house, the idle *yulow* inboard. He knew very well that he would never see her again.

And presently they arrived at the *yamen,* gray and austere in its courtyard, where scribes and students hurried to and fro. The treasure-box was plumped down and opened before the eyes of high authority, and Alan was pushed forward. The magistrate, in his round cap and large spectacles, looked solemnly down and listened to a long tale which the police captain gabbled in swift Chinese—how wrongly told Alan had no means of knowing. His own story, when he was allowed to tell it, was listened to in silence. He explained as much of the original purpose of the expedition as he thought any one

would believe, outlined the subsequent happenings, and begged that Tyler, Bolliver & Tyler, Inc., of Shanghai, be notified at once.

Bespectacled interpreters, with wooden pens behind their ears, were called from inner rooms; big books were seriously consulted; and at length the magistrate agreed that Tyler, Bolliver & Tyler might exist. But such a story! And what about the baby?

"Drat the baby!" thought Alan. She really had nothing to do with it, he explained. She was merely an incident, an accident. She in no way influenced the state of the case. Like all excited people, Alan talked too much. He confused his statements and made himself unintelligible to his Chinese hearers. But he thought that he had wholly gained his point when the magistrate at last consented to send a telegram to Tyler, Bolliver & Tyler.

CHAPTER XIX

CROSS PURPOSES

JANE had spoken gallantly when she stood in the doorway of Mr. Tyler's office and said, "Now let 's go and do something about it!"

But it was not so easy to do anything about the plight of Mark and Alan Ingram. Apart from despatching notices to neighboring cities—after all, a very vague and slender hope—there was nothing to do but wait and wait. It seemed to Jane that she had spent her whole life waiting. Waiting to find the ship model, waiting for its return to the Ingrams, waiting for it to better their fortunes, waiting for news from China, for the *Kyoto Maru* to reach Shanghai, and now this most weary and hideous waiting of all!

Mr. Bolliver had no more heart than she for the bright, many-wondered streets of Shanghai.

He felt that this was his fault, irremediably; Mr. Tyler thought—perhaps, more truly—that it was his. Jane, in a morbid probing of first causes, thought the blame was all hers from the beginning, for ferreting out too well the secret of the *Fortune of the Indies*. So it was not a very gay party that dined in the lofty salon of the hotel and walked aimlessly down the green bund.

Then there came a telegram, a telegram succinct but not to be understood. Mr. Tyler laid it before Mr. Bolliver with a gesture hopeful but hesitant. The message was from Changhow, and ran thus:

Got one boy one baby do you want?

"It seems hardly possible," Mr. Tyler said, "that such a telegram should be sent me if there were not some foundation for it, but—but the description is n't right."

"One boy," Mr. Bolliver mused. "They certainly would n't call Alan a baby."

"I should think not!" Jane burst out, scornfully.

"Then what about the baby?" Mr. Bolliver queried, hopelessly. "Jane, do you think it at

all likely that either of your brothers would be traveling about with a baby?"

Jane gave the subject grave and careful consideration.

"No," she said, after deep thought, "I don't. Alan hates 'em, and Mark laughs at 'em. Certainly, they would n't have one with them when they were traveling around with treasures. That is— Oh, no, they *could n't*. It 's—it 's perfectly idiotic."

"It does sound absurd," Mr. Tyler agreed. "They must be on the wrong track. But what made them wire *me* unless there were something to warrant it?" He reverted to his original perplexity.

They decided at last to despatch a message to this Magistrate Li-Chen of Changhow asking for more detail. And they telegraphed, also, to the European settlement at Changhow requesting that the consular officer give his attention to the matter. But Mr. Tyler was gravely troubled. He sent his messages in haste, with no second look at them, and he addressed each to the other.

So that a puzzled gentleman in the Changhow settlement read and reread these words:

Send more detail no baby involved in case to my knowledge want whereabouts Mark and Alan Ingram.

While Li-Chen frowned behind his spectacles as he deciphered the following:

Ask you will kindly investigate case of boy held by Changhow municipal magistrate and advise me result at once.

The respective replies reached Mr. Tyler somewhat later. From the settlement came this:

Regret have no knowledge of matter can you explain?

And from the *yamen:*

Have investigate with same result hold one boy one baby.

Mr Tyler clutched his gray forelock.

"This is maddening!" he cried. "Purely maddening! Can't they understand the English language? We 're absolutely no farther on than before! But it seems conclusive that it can't be either Mark or Alan—my message to the magistrate would have brought a definite answer if it had been either. No, we 're on the

wrong track, Bart. But perhaps I 'd better send some one to Changhow."

"Can't we go, Mr. Bolliver?" Jane said suddenly. "We 'd be *doing* something then. Is n't it a place we could go to?"

"Certainly it is," Mr. Bolliver agreed. "But —dear me!—I promised your aunts—"

"Come!" Jane cried.

And Mr. Bolliver came.

Mark wove his way through interminable dirty streets till he worked unconsciously toward the west end of the city and wandered between the high walls of merchants' mansions down broad, flagged street-ways. So far his questionings had been met with puzzled staring, incomprehensible jabberings, and a few vaguely-pointed directions. He felt himself almost lost now, but still kept the direction of the river, he hoped. Presently he found himself near the water again, but not the water of the river. High-spanned bridges sprang into view, the traffic again became jostling and crowded, and he was pushed to one side by running barrow-coolies and chair-porters. As he stepped aside to avoid a jolting wheel-

barrow, he collided violently with a bowed runner who carried the forward pole of a chair upon his shoulder. Mark went sprawling into the slime, and the next moment—wonder of wonders—there spoke in English a woman's voice, with a slow Scotch accent.

"I 'm ever so sorry! No harm but mud, I hope?"

He sprang up beside the chair, which had halted close to him, and, to its occupant's extreme astonishment, poured forth half his tale in one gasp.

"You must really excuse me," he added suddenly, after a pause for breath, noting all at once the amazement in his listener's gray eyes, "but oh, if you knew how great it is to see an English person!"

O fortunate Mark, to be knocked head over heels by this chair of all others! This was Miss Macdougal from the Medical Mission Hospital, it appeared, and indeed she was the very person who 'd be glad to help him out. It was not her habit, she informed him, to succor every young ragamuffin who told her a tale of woe in the streets, merely because he spoke her tongue. But she believed Mark, and told him so. She

also summoned another chair, magically, and, following Mark's shadowy directions, the procession set forth for the Sien Kang landing-place.

"And you 'll be the very person, too, who can tell me what to do with Ping-Pong," Mark shouted, when the chairs came within hailing distance of each other. "You can take her to your hospital, or something!"

"What in the name of mercy is Ping-Pong?" Miss Macdougal shouted back.

But it was impossible to explain Ping-Pong from the bobbing chair, so Mark waited. He had not mistaken the direction, after all. The chair-coolies trotted to within view of several landing-places, and finally, below the wall, the *Sham-Poo's* stumpy mast and drooping sail showed familiarly. Mark leaped forth and ran down to her, slipping and stumbling.

"Alan!" he cried. "Come on, old scout! I told you something would happen!"

But Alan did not answer. Mark dashed into the low, dark deck-house. No Alan! No Ping-Pong! No treasure chest! Nothing but the familiar dim stuffiness, the tick-tick of little leggy creatures investigating the rice-bag.

Miss Macdougal was perhaps less credulous now. She looked keenly at Mark.

"If all this is true," she said, "you 're to be pitied. But it 's not been my habit to indulge much in play-acting. I fear the best I can do for you is to send you on to the Settlement; there are Americans there, and if any can help you, it 's there they can."

She fished in her bag and gave him a handful of *cash*—"for the chair-coolies," she explained, —and then she gave directions to his porters and left him swiftly. Mark stood looking after the swinging chair, wondering miserably if it would, then, be impossible for any one to believe him. He settled himself in his own chair, the coolies lurched forward, and he turned about—much as Alan had done—to catch a last glimpse of the little *Sham-Poo*.

The European settlement of Changhow lies four miles outside the Chinese city proper, on a sort of bund that faces the canal. The few ugly foreign buildings stand aggressively alone, and Changhow goes busily about its own affairs without the help or hindrance of the settlement. Mark alighted outside the walls of the administrative building, brushed as much

of the dried mud from his clothes as possible, and entered.

To the gentleman leisurely writing at a flat desk, he said, by way of introduction:

"I 'm Mark Ingram."

Then, as a dazed and dawning look of haunting memory and puzzled recognition began to take form in his hearer's eyes, he added:

"Why, sir, why should n't I be?"

"By Jove—you *should* be!" the man cried. "Mark Ingram, you say? Then you 're one of them! But I say, where are Alan and the baby?"

Mark's jaw fell. He almost staggered.

"What in the name of creation do *you* know about Alan and the baby?" he demanded faintly.

For answer, the official flapped down before him Mr. Tyler's incomprehensible telegram.

"But—how did you get this? How did they know—? What—? When—?" Mark gave up, with a feeble groan of amazement.

"Fell on me out of a clear sky," the man stated. "No idea what it meant. No previous correspondence with the gentleman. Not

more than a couple of hours elapse, when one of the parties named walks in upon me."

"If they knew about the baby," Mark was saying weakly, "they must have heard from Alan; but if they heard from him, they 'd know where he was—and I don't know where he is, and—"

"I don't know where *I* am," the official cried. "Man alive, tell us the story and give me leave to untie my senses."

Alan sat in an outer room of the *yamen*. Ping-Pong lay asleep on the floor, the treasure-box was just in sight in the next room, and a burly native policeman leaned against the door-post. They were holding "one boy, one baby" —and one box, they might have added—till further instructions came from Shanghai. The magistrate had "investigated" to the full extent of his own and his assistant's English; he failed to understand the telegram from Mr. Tyler—as well he might—and he was waiting for enlightenment. What became of the prisoners during this more or less uncertain period mattered little to him. They might have squatted in the courtyard of the *yamen* for a week, and

probably would have done so, had not "something happened," as Mark would have put it.

Alan was anxious, weary, furiously angry, and wholly famished; even the last muddy rice had been eaten long ago. Ping-Pong, too, was hungry; she whimpered in her sleep and sucked her thumb for solace. Alan stared at her and shook his head.

"You're 'bad joss pidgin,' all right," he muttered. "You 've balled up this expedition considerably. And I don't blame them in the least for thinking you must form an important part of a nefarious plot. As an existing fact, you 're preposterous. Are you really there at all?"

Ping-Pong was quite there. She wriggled over with a sigh and sought to find a softer place on the flagged floor. Alan kept his eyes warily upon the treasure-box at intervals. He more than suspected that at the first opportunity every official would have a fat "squeeze" from that chest. He wondered what he could do if he should see them carrying it off out of sight. And how was it possible that he could ever get in touch with Mark? Mark, reckless spirit, for all he knew, was deep in some adventure wilder than that of the Black Joss by this time.

"I wonder if they could possibly be bribed?" Alan speculated.

While he was busy with this thought, there came a stir in the courtyard, the bump of carrying-chairs being unslung, and then there appeared through the gateway a man and a woman in European dress. Alan's heart leaped as he sprang to his feet. The man was young, and professional-looking in his white duck clothes; he might have been a hospital interne or a mission-worker. The woman was older, sandy and tall, with a slow gleam in her gray eyes and the quaintest drawl to the Chinese words she spoke to one of the young clerks.

"You spin the lingo better than I ever will," the young man said. "Tell him Dr. Rodney says he *must* send his mother to the hospital at once or there 's no telling what 'll happen. I even heard that they let some native quack put one of those awful green devil-plasters on her."

So the woman turned to address the Chinese youth, and as she talked her slow eyes strayed past him to where Alan stood, all afire, waiting his chance to speak.

"Hullo," she thought inwardly, below the

Chinese phrases she spoke; "now where have I seen those eyes before?"

Her own dropped downward to where Ping-Pong, who had awakened, was twining herself apprehensively around Alan's feet. The gleam lit the woman's face; she pushed past doctor and student.

"In the name of all that 's wonderful," she said heartily, "I believe you 're Alan and Ping-Pong!"

At which Alan sat down abruptly on the bench and stared giddily at her.

"Now don't fash yourself," she said easily. "I 've just as much as called your poor, decent brother a liar and sent him posting off to the Settlement. Rodney, will you go now and get another chair, and we 'll all be off after him."

"But—" said Alan.

"But—" said Dr. Rodney.

"Havers!" said Miss Macdougal. "It 's all right."

The way she addressed those surprised Chinese officials caused Alan to grin in ever-increasing respect and admiration. She spoke to them fluently in Chinese; she told them this had never been a municipal matter, anyway—it was for

the settlement to deal with, as they should have seen at once. And apparently the word of the Medical Mission was law, for men ran to do her bidding—to lift the treasure-box into one of the chairs, which had arrived, and to bow, smiling gravely, at Alan.

To Alan's intense relief, it was Miss Macdougal who took Ping-Pong upon her lap, addressing her in Oriental monosyllables and running a professional finger over her plump little arms and legs. The three chairs swung out of the *yamen* courtyard, and Alan looked about him and began to think the nightmare was assuming more nearly the characteristics of a pleasant dream. It was a long way to the settlement—through suburban reaches where mulberry trees leaned above high walls; through the interminable narrow ways of the city, with the stench and noise and turmoil of it, the chair-coolies uttering fearful cries as they dashed among the jostling pedestrians and ingeniously avoided the thousand obstacles in the route.

At last they came to the settlement, aloof on its pathetic pretense of bund, and the chairs came to a jolting standstill outside the administrative building.

"What luck for us if he 'd gone, after all!" Miss Macdougal cried as they alighted. "Was I not the doubting, faithless one—and I knew all the while I should have trusted the good honest eyes of him. Eh, no! Here he is, and all!"

Mark, who had not much more than finished his story, sprang up as she entered. He looked incredulously from Ping-Pong in her arms to Alan behind her. He leaned upon the table beside him, speechless. The administrative official hastily consulted the telegram.

"My word!" he ejaculated in awed tones, "If it is n't the rest of 'em!"

"Mok! Mok!" squeaked Ping-Pong. It was the nearest she had ever come to an attempt at the name of her rescuer. He stared at her absently.

"It 's too much for me," he muttered, "too much!"

"It 's strange, now," Miss Macdougal agreed vigorously, "strange enough. A city of a million inhabitants is n't a place you 'd think likely to be running into the two ends of an adventure in one day. It was fate, now, Mr. Mark, giving me a chance to square myself with

you after giving you the slip, with you in such a scrape."

"Indeed," Mark murmured, "you were kind enough, coming on that wild goose chase to the river. But I think you must be some sort of a wizard or an angel or something."

"Merely lucky," said she, twinkling slowly. "Come now, we 'll sit down and get to the bottom of this."

Which they did. There followed a pause in the rapid-fire conversation, while another telegram was despatched to Mr. Tyler. Oh, if Mr. Bolliver and Jane—already steaming up the Soochow Creek in a passenger-launch—could have seen that message!

"And you 'll take Ping-Pong, then?" Mark asked anxiously, "or tell me where to take her?"

"Yes, we 'll look out for Ping-Pong," Miss Macdougal assured him. "I must say, you 're the grand nursemaids; she looks as smooth and content as a kitten. Yes indeed, we 'll do with her—and she 'll be brought up a Christian, and one that won't forget who it was pulled her out of the river."

Mark grinned vaguely.

"Sometimes," he said, "it would be jolly if you'd let me know how she gets on. I 'll give you my address. I suppose I 'll get back there some day. If I 'm ever a millionaire, I 'd like to send her to college, or something—just for fun, you know, on account of the adventure."

"The way our grateful patients stick up red and gold votive tablets all over the hospital," Dr. Rodney said.

"Exactly," said Mark.

"Don't talk, Rodney," Miss Macdougal ordered. "Step out and be arranging for a boat. The thing these boys want to do is to reach Shanghai as fast as they can. We 're keeping them in torment."

"But first we 'll all dine together," cried the settlement official. "A feast, if it can be done at such short notice."

"Think of it—not rice and mud!" murmured Alan.

"Eh?" said Miss Macdougal.

CHAPTER XX

THE FORTUNE MAKES PORT

OH, glory!— Think of it, think of it!'' Alan sighed; not of the feast this time, for that was long past, but of miracles in general.

For he and Mark—and the fortune of the Ingrams—were aboard a boat that puffed and inched its way into the canal under the young stars. They sat up late, watching the slow progress along the ancient waterway, catching through the darkness dim gleams of single-arched bridges spanning the water with high-flung, graceful curves; mulberry orchards sighing in the night-wind; shrines half seen; villages passed in mantling purple gloom. There was a compelling mystery about the canal, so magnificent even in its decay, the triumph of its crumbling masonry half-shrouded by the night.

And they were going to Shanghai—to

Shanghai, with *sycee* silver in their pockets and the treasure at their feet. And Ping-Pong was safe asleep in a white crib at the Mission, Mark thought complacently. He refused to regard her as "bad joss pidgin," despite the confusion she had wrought in their identification. Miss Macdougal had stood with Dr. Rodney and half the settlement to see them off at the landing-place. She had run back and fetched Ping-Pong, and had made her wave a small fist at Mark.

"When ye get to America," Miss Macdougal had shouted, "give my love to Jane! She must be a fine lass!"

Mark smiled vaguely now, half-asleep over a remembered chronicle of the last few hours. The boys turned in at last, and Mark whacked his brother on the shoulder.

"What do you think of my policy now?" he inquired.

"Which policy?" Alan yawned.

" 'Wait till something turns up.' "

"Oh, shucks!" said Alan, evasively.

Next day they made their puffing advance through narrow and twisting water-streets of

ancient cities, where balconies overhung the stream and crooked stone steps led to steep alleys above. The press of boats here was very great. It was like a traffic jam in New York, Mark said, with no "cop's" whistle to straighten out the tangle. The boats crawled along side by side, some headed up, some down. Their progress was attended by the usual yelling and gong-beating of Chinese water-travel, and the boys watched it all with lazy amusement, thankful that they did not have to pilot the *Sham-Poo* through this bedlam.

"Poor little old *Sham-Poo,*" Mark mused. "I rather liked her, at the last."

Suddenly Alan seized Mark's arm. He looked almost ghastly.

"In the name of goodness, what 's the matter with you?" his brother demanded quickly.

"I say, Mark! Am I so far gone as that? I—oh, nonsense!"

"Easy now, old man. What 's up?" Mark urged gently.

Alan, indeed, was white and nervous; he had felt the long strain more heavily than his happy-go-lucky brother.

"It 's bosh, of course. I guess it 's because

of eating nothing but muddy rice for so long. Don't think I 'm silly—but—I thought I saw —Jane!"

Mark frowned. Then he clapped Alan on the shoulder.

"That 's all right," he said. "You 're pretty nearly all in. So am I. Buck up, now. Look at that jolly old house—it looks as if it was holding its skirt up out of the water!"

But Alan hesitated miserably.

"Mark," he said in a low voice, "you look. I don't dare. Sitting in the stern of a launch, to the right, just beyond the next boat."

Mark laughed to humor him.

"All right, I 'll look."

The next moment his hand tightened painfully on his brother's arm, and Alan looked up to see him gazing, white-faced, across the waterway.

"It—it is Jane!" he whispered. "We—we could n't both see it—not even with the rice."

But at that moment the vision changed to reality. Mr. Bolliver, who would scarcely be included in the hallucination, sprang up from beside the little girl whose eyes had met Mark's. They never knew how the space be-

tween them was traversed. Alan had a vague impression of springing to the gunwale of the boat close beside them—of an indignant native outcry—of Mark ahead of him, the box in his grasp. And the next instant warm flesh-and-blood arms were around them both.

"You must n't! We 're too dirty!" Mark heard himself saying, marveling all the while at his commonplace remark, as though he had seen Jane only an hour ago. But it *was* Jane's own voice that cried:

"You 're *not* dirty. I don't care! Oh, we 're not any of us dreaming, are we?"

Things became incoherent. A lump of silver was tossed to the gaping master of the boys' boat, and he presently slipped into a backwater to head round for Changhow. And Mr. Bolliver's launch was ordered to turn around and make back to Shanghai as fast as possible.

"I 'm so tired of trying to figure things out," Mark said, holding his head. "Oh, really, this is the worst of all—it can't be true."

But Jane was gazing, sober-eyed, at a canvas-covered box.

"You don't mean to say," she breathed, "that it 's really the fortune of the Ingrams!"

"I *suppose* it 's really you I 'm talking to," Mark said. "I don't even yet see how on earth you happen to be real. But it *is* the fortune of the Ingrams. You wait! We don't open it here, with the vulgar eye of the multitude upon us."

"But what about the baby?" Mr. Bolliver demanded suddenly. "I knew there could n't be one—and there is n't."

"But there *was!*" the boys cried together, like a Greek chorus. And the tale of Ping-Pong was told.

"Oh, why did n't you keep her!" Jane mourned. "I could have brought her up to be a—a—what is it, now?"

"An ornament to the community?" Mr. Bolliver suggested.

"Yes," Alan said, "I can see the aunts standing for any Chinee baby roaming about their premises!"

"She certainly threw me off the scent," Mr. Bolliver said. And off went the talk at a tangent, leading finally to the discovery of the mixed telegrams. (Mark had read and reread

the one which had puzzled the settlement gentleman.)

"Poor Nick!" Mr. Bolliver murmured. "Really, if all his business is transacted along these lines! He 's no older than I am, but—upon my soul!"

Alan was too weary for more thought. He could only shake his head at intervals and mutter:

"Think of it! It 's not possible, you know —none of it!"

Mr. Nicholas Tyler paced his office in a more desperate frame of mind than ever. Here lay the good tidings, in his hand—and Bart and Jane were steaming away from them. How could he catch them now? How stop them from an anxious and vain chase all over Changhow? Another telegram to the settlement—that would be the thing to do!

"Yes, yes, that 's it," Mr. Tyler agreed with himself distractedly, and he despatched his message.

It was answered by one which said that the boys had left for Shanghai.

"Tut, tut," Mr. Tyler mused in annoyance.

"All the journey for nothing, and no way to turn them back. My faith, I 've not handled any of this too well."

He was still pondering over his various blunders when a motley and joyous party burst into his office.

"Upon my soul! My faith!" was all that he could ejaculate, alternately.

Mark and Alan thought they would succumb soon if there must be many more explanations. But explanations were inevitable; all weary and dirty as they were, they found themselves caught once more in the net of talk. To steady himself, and get back to reality, Mark sometimes let his eyes rest wonderingly on the familiar figure of his sister—familiar, and yet so strange, too. It seemed good to see her earnest face, her straight tawny hair—the blue tape that somehow took him back to Resthaven still in evidence upon it—good to meet the steady blue gaze of her eyes, filled now with pride and eagerness. And at the end of all the talk, there was the canvas-covered box still to be accounted for.

Mark rose and slipped off the duck casing, and there stood revealed the little polished lac-

quer chest, with the seal that he had broken in the house of Huen—was it years ago?

"Open it, old Jane," he said.

So Jane lifted the cover, and there floated up to her unbelieving eyes the dusky gleam of gold, the cloudy radiance of pearls, the deep fire of rubies, the cool sea-green of jade. She touched the things cautiously, but they remained as solid as before.

"Oh, who could imagine it!" she said in a hushed voice. "I—I thought it would be bank-notes!"

Mr. Tyler was peering over one shoulder and Mr. Bolliver over the other.

"Unless I 'm very much mistaken," Mr. Tyler said, "these things are worth more than two hundred thousand taels to-day. My soul, Bart, look at that ruby alone!"

"Please take 'em all away," said Mark wearily, "and put them in your safe before something more happens to them. And the sooner they 're turned into solid, secure money in the bank, the happier I 'll be."

"But oh!" said Jane, looking wistfully within the closing lid, "it 's such a wonderful treasure, just the way it is!"

"Yes," Alan commented, "I suppose you 'd like to keep 'em to put around on the mantelpiece and look at, would n't you?"

"You *are* just the same, are n't you!" Jane remarked.

That evening at sunset, when the boys had gleefully changed into hastily purchased clothes and dined leisurely off a meal in which everything but rice figured, they all went out upon the bund to stroll and talk yet a little more.

"I wonder what will become of Chun Lon?" Jane mused.

"There he lies now, for all I know or care," Mark said, "in his precious dead city. I suppose his boat-coolies untied him when they woke up, and everybody was in a frightful stew."

"He won't find Shanghai a hospitable spot," Mr. Bolliver said, "nor another job as mess-boy so easy to get. Tyler 'll see to that. And if the Sikhs ever get him, he 'll bewail the day he met you."

"Think of its being all over," Alan sighed.

"And the old thing coming true after all," Mark added.

"What old thing?" asked Jane.

"About the fortune of the Ingrams coming and going with the *Fortune of the Indies.* Jane, you certainly did start a ball rolling when you began prying into that story."

"I 'm glad I did now, I think," she said.

"If China was any more wild and exciting when Great-grandfather Mark had dealings with it," said Alan, "why I 'm glad I did n't live a century earlier."

"Oh, I don't know," Jane said, dreamily.

She was staring out over the bund at the busy Whangpoo with its moving traffic of vessels. Was it a trick of the blinding sunset on this tangle of masts and funnels? She saw vaguely, yet clearly, too, a lofty ship that towered, all gold across the sun, above the other boats. They were setting sail aboard her. How strange! There was not a breath of wind, yet one by one they shimmered into place—inclusive of the moonsail. . . . A man leaned at the taffrail, with his blue eyes set eastward. *"Haul on the bowlin', the bowlin' haul!"* She was weighing for home—to run before the trades, to fight around the Horn, to thunder up and up the long Atlantic seas till she dropped anchor in a gray harbor on a gray shore. A

pillared house would watch for her from among its elms, and two little ladies would run down from the curved stone steps to the wharf. They would be very old ladies, in little gray gowns. Was it Jane they were watching for, and not Great-grandfather Mark, after all? There was no clipper ship there in the Whangpoo River. How could there be?

"Dear, dear little aunties!" murmured Jane.

"Wake up," said Mark, putting an arm suddenly over her shoulder. "This is no place to sleep, though I 'd like to. Think of a real bed, Alan. Ai-ya!"

Jane slid her hand through his arm. She looked back at the darkening river. The *Fortune of the Indies* was gone, standing out with a fair breeze for Resthaven.

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